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## Sociological Perspective on Mental Health of Women

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### Abstract

*Discourse on mental health has been articulated under varied paradigms viz. the biological, the psychological and the sociological. While the biological and the psychological are credible frameworks for understanding the cause and shaping the response towards mental disorders, the same, nevertheless, fail to grasp the phenomenological aspect of the life and experience of individuals who suffer from mental disorder. The present paper adopts the sociological paradigm in exploring mental health particularly that of the women whose social circumstances and vulnerabilities is believed to cause Common Mental Disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders etc. among them. The argument mooted here is that the inimical social circumstances women are mired in cause's mental disorders among them. Women's mental health, it is emphasized, should be approached from the distress perspective owing to the fact that the same is impacted most often than not by their social circumstances than by biological or psychological factors.*

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Women, Sociological Paradigm

The sociological paradigm has added a significant dimension towards a more comprehensive understanding of the norm of literature on mental health. Peggy Thoits points out that the sociological paradigm views mental disorders as resulting from environmental factors rather than as physical anomalies (as in the case of the biological paradigm) or as aberrations in the mind or psyche (as in the case of the psychological paradigm). Whereas the latter paradigms locate the determinants of mental disorder within the human entity, the former locates it without – in the social environment, one is situated in (2010). Though the biological paradigm held its influence on the way mental disorder was conceptualized and addressed, it was pointed out by many scholars that social, economic and cultural aspects also ought to be factored in as biological factors occur in conjunction with the socio-cultural reality of an individual's life rather than in isolation from the same (Addlakha, 2008).

### Sociological Perspective on Mental Health

Addlakha refers to the works of Freud on psychoanalysis which took cognizance of childhood development, culture and sexuality in affecting mental health thereby opening up to perspectives from psychology, sociology, and anthropology and questioning the singular claim of the biological paradigm in unfurling the intricacies of the disorder. In the view posited by the sociological paradigm, the bio-medical and the psychological stance lead to pathologisation of the individual. Sociologists forward the opinion that mental disorder is not caused by biological and psychological characteristics of the human subjects alone but also by structural features which impact the role, status, behaviour and resources privileging some members of the society to the detriment of others. Genetic and psychological factors on their own cannot account for mental disorder; cognizance has to be taken of social dynamics in explaining mental health and disorder. As Bus field articulates, "Geneticists' reported claims notwithstanding, social processes are crucial to the understanding of mental health and disorder in a range of ways. First, social processes shape the very concepts of mental health and