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Occupational problems of women bus conductors

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Abstract

Transport industry has long been considered men's field. Women were away from this sector till 1980. Later on women gradually entered into this sector as bus conductors in different parts of India. In the same way, the situation can be seen in Karnataka road transport sectors both in KSRTC and BMTC. There was no single woman conductor till 1980, but gradually 12 women conductors were recruited. Later few were appointed on compensatory grounds against the death of their husbands or their family members till 1990. Gradually it increased to more number of women conductors. The unit of the study is an organization namely North-West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) Hubballi-Dharwad. The data was collected through pre-structured questionnaire method. The sample size for the study is comprised of 100 women bus conductors were selected based on random sampling. The results of the study revealed that regarding the working hours fixations (47%) of the women bus conductors are agreed that they have the occupational problems at work place, whereas 46 per cent of them are agreed that they are facing problems due to depression and doing full justice to their family. Round about 40 per cent of the women bus conductors are agreed that they are facing problems while doing local route duties, long routes duties and worry about work. It also showed that majority (50.00%) of the women bus conductors have severe musculoskeletal pain experiences in the legs, ankle/feet, knees, thighs, palm/fingers and in the wrist. Maintaining family as well as doing the local route duties made the women bus conductors to miss quality time with family and friend because of pressure of work. It can be concluded that women bus conductors are highly suffer from pain in different parts of the body mainly in the leg, ankle/feet, knees, thighs, lower back and in the palm /fingers regions, it makes the women conductors hinders their normal work as well as feel to leave the job.

Keywords: Commuters, misbehaviour, portae, Trans

Introduction

Transport or transportation is the movement of people and goods from one place to another. The term is derived from the Latin words Trans (across) and portae (to carry). In India, many forms of public transportation are available for passengers. Among them, buses play a significant role. The safety of the general public both within the bus and on the road is given little priority (Gandopadhyay *et al.*, 2012). It is an open truth that working women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. A gender bias creates an obstacle at the every stage in working environment, the new generation of female transformed the traditional patriarchal social structure across the globe this social shift which had been set in motion at the end of 20th century in India. In this view, the challenges and problems of women bus conductor work has required more physical and interactive skills than intellectual knowledge they have to work in different shift every day and interact with commuters of multi personality and bare misbehaviour of passengers.

Objective

To study the occupational problems of women bus conductors.

To study the musculoskeletal pain experiences of women bus Conductors.

Material and methods

The unit of the study is an organization namely North-West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) Hubli-Dharwad. The data was collected through pre-structured questionnaire method at various depots like NWKRTC Dharwad district. The sample size for the study is comprised of 100 women bus conductors were selected based on random

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sampling. The study was conducted in the year 2015-2016. The completed questionnaires were collected and findings were entered into SPSS data base. Data was then analyzed statistically to obtain the results in terms of frequencies and percentages, weighted average mean score. Chi-square test was used to find the association between experience and musculoskeletal pain experience of women bus conductors

Results and discussion

Table 1 showed that the working hours fixations (47%) of the women bus conductors are agreed that they have the occupational problems at work place, whereas 46 per cent of them are agreed that they are facing problems due to depression and doing full justice to their family. Round about 40 per cent of the women bus conductors are agreed that they are facing problems while doing local route duties, long routes duties and worry about work. It can also be seen that (37%) of the women bus conductors are disagreed because of the difficulty in doing night shift and they are anxious while carrying cash at work place. It is also observed that (30%) of them are disagreed as they have male domination at workplace and companionship and management is more concerned about the problems of women. According to Pooja and Reshma (2013) [8] their findings revealed that work life balance where lady bus conductors highly facing difficulty in doing night shift because of unavailability of ladies room and security, often they think and worry about their work responsibilities, difficulty in doing long route duties because of extension of working hours and perception of family members, ever miss out any quality time with their friends and family because of pressure of work, they ever feel tired or depressed because of work and because of fluctuating working hours it's difficult to face misunderstanding of family members.

The results in the Table 1 shows that the women bus conductors who are working in the local route duties and in the long route duties express their difficulty in their work because of overload work and extension of working hours and they also don't have any availability of ladies room and security in working place. The women bus conductors have no time at all to spend quality time with their family and friends because of the pressure of work and of male domination that, s why it is very difficult to do their duty in the late hours.

Table 2 shows that musculoskeletal pain experiences by women bus conductors. The most common musculoskeletal pains observed among the women bus conductors in different parts of the body are as follows.

Neck

It is observed from the table 2 that (42%) of the women bus conductors experience very mild pain in the neck region followed by 23 per cent moderate pain, 16 per cent mild pain, 13 percent very severe pain and 6 per cent severe pain.

Shoulder

The women bus conductors have very mild pain in the shoulder that is (34%) followed by 20 per cent of them have mild pain, 17 per cent of them have moderate and very severe pain and 12 per cent of them have severe pain experiences.

Upper back

The women bus conductors experiences musculoskeletal pain in the upper back part which is very mild (21%) followed by 20 per cent of them have mild pain, 19 per cent of them have

moderate pain, 18 per cent of them have severe pain and 17 per cent of them have very severe pain experiences.

Upper arms

It is also seen that the women bus conductors have (48%) very mild pain experience, 18 per cent moderate, 14 per cent very severe, and the least (8%) severe pain experience.

Elbows

It is understood that the majority of women bus conductors have very mild pain experience in their elbows it is (50%).

Lower back

It is observed that the women bus conductors have almost equal pain experiences in their lower back part of the body which is between 23-21 per cent.

Lower arms

The women bus conductors have (49%) very mild pain experience in their lower arms followed by 22 per cent moderate, 12 per cent very severe, 11 per cent severe and 6 per cent mild pain experience.

Wrist

The women bus conductors have wrist pain experience in their duties. It is found that they have 44 per cent very mild pain experience, 22 per cent moderate, 15 per cent very severe, 12 per cent severe and 7 per cent mild respectively.

Palm/Fingers

It is also seen that the women bus conductors are suffering from muscular pain experiences while they are performing their duties. They have (41%) very mild pain experience, 21 per cent very severe, 16 per cent moderate, 11 per cent mild and severe pain experience.

Thighs

Majority (36%) of the women bus conductors are experiencing very severe pain in their thighs and few (7%) of them have mild pain experience.

Knees

Pertaining to the pain experiences in the knees, the majority (42%) of the women bus conductors are experiencing very severe pain and very few (10%) of them have mild pain experience.

Legs

It can be seen that (52%) of the women bus conductors have been suffering from the leg pain while they are on duties.

Ankle feet

Majority (49%) of the women bus conductors have very severe pain experience in their ankle and few (8%) of them have mild pain experience.

Table 2 reveals the musculoskeletal pain experiences of women bus conductors which are as follows:

Legs

It has been observed that the women bus conductors experience very severe pain in the legs that is 52.00 per cent as their prolonged standing posture in the buses the conductors assume an incorrect posture and the bus bouncing also make the legs painful they have to control the body only on the legs because there is no comfortable situation to stand

correctly in the bus.

Similar findings reported by Somnath *et al.* (2012)^[9] revealed that most of the bus conductors were experiencing discomfort mainly in the legs 93.3 per cent they experienced more pain in the left leg than in the right one as their prolonged standing posture in the buses exerted excessive pressure on the left leg.

Ankle/Feet

The women bus conductors have very severe pain experience in their ankle/feet, because they have to stand only on the legs thought the day without sitting or taking rest, they also have the experience of burning sensation due to heavy burden on the feet.

Ajit *et al.* (2015) disclosed that the only support that the bus conductors' body gets is when they stand with their feet apart for a good balance and sometimes lean on the back rest of the seats.

Knees

More than 42.00 per cent of the women bus conductors have very severe pain experience in their knees as they have to bend towards the passengers to issue the tickets, occasionally they take the support of the pole of the bus or of the seat. Therefore the severe pain exists in the knees

Similar findings reported by Ajit *et al.* (2015) which revealed knee pain arises due to their long and continuous hours of standing. While standing in the bus the bus conductors assume an incorrect posture. Because of the continuous bouncing of the bus the weight is not evenly distributed. A prolonged standing posture can also lead to fatigue of muscles leading to discomfort and then pain.

Thighs

It is observed that 36.00 per cent of the women bus conductors experience pain in the thighs because of continuous standing and rocking in the bus while they are doing their duties.

Palm /fingers

41.00 per cent of the women bus conductors experience moderate pain in the palm /fingers because of continuous handling of ticket machine and pressing buttons repeatedly to give issue the tickets to the passengers that leads to pain in the fingers, they also have to keep the money in the palms.

Wrist

It is observed that 44.00 per cent of women bus conductors experience very mild pain in the wrist because of handling the ticket machine and bending the wrist towards passengers Similar findings reported by Somanath (2012)^[9] revealed that 70.00 per cent wrist pain has been found because of handling the ticket machine.

Lower arms

It is observed that 49.00 per cent of the women bus conductors experience very mild pain in the lower arms because of handling the ticket machine and money bag.

Lower back

It is can be seen that 23.00 per cent of the women bus conductors have very severe pain experience in the lower back because of the vibration of the bus swaying as the bus bounces over potholes with minimum support as both hands are occupied in providing tickets and excepting money brings pressure on their lower back. The only support that their body gets is when they stand with their feet apart for a good balance and sometimes lean on the back rest of the seats.

Similar findings reported by Ajit *et al.* (2015) which revealed the only support that their body gets is when they stand with their feet apart for a good balance and sometimes lean on the back rest of the seats.

Elbows

Women bus conductors have very mild pain experience in their elbows as there is no outstanding stress on the elbows.

Upper arms

Here also women bus conductors have very mild pain experience in their upper arms because there is no proper reason for the pain.

Shoulder and neck

The women bus conductors continuously have to wear a ticket box and satchet for the money. This brings pressure on the shoulder, conductors shoulder is an elevation to prevent satchet as well as ticket box from slipping down this continuous elevated posture of shoulder leads to muscle pain. Neck pain is caused by bearing load on the neck and shoulder muscles with repetitive movements.

Similar findings reported by Ajit *et al.* (2015) showed that the neck held in a flexed position while issuing tickets to passengers and they move around the bus as the neck is prone to flexion most of the time there are chances of pain and discomfort in the neck due to the strenuous workload.

Association between experience and musculoskeletal pain experience of women bus conductors presented in the table 3, it revealed that experience has highly significant association with musculoskeletal pain experience at 0.01 level of significance. From the table 3 it also shows that shift hours has highly associated with musculoskeletal pain experience at 0.01 level of significance. Table 3 shows that there is a close association between their experience and musculoskeletal pain experience. The women bus conductors have the pain experiences in the legs, ankle/feet, knees, thighs, palm fingers and in other parts of the body. The sensation of pain arises in all these parts because of heavy workload, discomfort ability and the old age factor.

Table 1: Occupational problems of women bus conductors at work place N=100

Sl. No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Weighted Mean score
1	Difficulty in doing night shift because of perception of family members.	9 (9.00)	16 (16.00)	18 (18.00)	37 (37.00)	20 (20.00)	2.57
2	Difficulty in doing night shift because of unavailability of ladies room and security.	11 (11.00)	35 (35.00)	13 (13.00)	29 (29.00)	12 (12.00)	3.04
3	Difficulty in doing long route because of extension of working hours.	9 (9.00)	37 (37.00)	27 (27.00)	23 (23.00)	4 (4.00)	3.24
4	Difficulty in doing ordinary/local route duties because of overload workload.	9 (9.00)	39 (39.00)	24 (24.00)	24 (24.00)	4 (4.00)	3.97

5	Working hours are fixed.	20 (20.00)	47 (47.00)	10 (10.00)	19 (19.00)	4 (4.00)	3.6
6	Because of fluctuating working hours it's difficult to face misunderstanding of family members.	7 (7.00)	20 (20.00)	19 (19.00)	35 (35.00)	19 (19.00)	2.61
7	Fluctuating working period is foremost reason to leave the job.	5 (5.00)	34 (34.00)	25 (25.00)	21 (21.00)	15 (15.00)	2.93
8	I am often think or worry about work(when you are not actually at work)	7 (7.00)	38 (38.00)	16 (16.00)	22 (22.00)	6 (6.00)	2.85
9	I am ever miss out any quality time with my family or my friends because of pressure of work.	27 (27.00)	39 (39.00)	16 (16.00)	12 (12.00)	6 (6.00)	3.69
10	I ever feel tired or depressed because of work.	11 (11.00)	46 (46.00)	20 (20.00)	11 (11.00)	12 (12.00)	3.33
11	Male domination at work place and companionship	6 (6.00)	23 (23.00)	14 (14.00)	26 (26.00)	31 (31.00)	2.47
12	The management is more concerned about the problems of women	4 (4.00)	31 (31.00)	26 (26.00)	30 (30.00)	9 (9.00)	2.91
13	Doing full justice to your family	33 (33.00)	46 (46.00)	12 (12.00)	5 (5.00)	4 (4.00)	3.99
14	Worry about family when at work	12 (12.00)	27 (27.00)	28 (28.00)	20 (20.00)	13 (13.00)	3.05
15	I am anxious while carrying cash at work place	2 (2.00)	24 (24.00)	14 (14.00)	23 (23.00)	37 (37.00)	2.31
16	It creates constant worry when there is no proper coordination with bus driver	13 (13.00)	40 (40.00)	10 (10.00)	25 (25.00)	12 (12.00)	2.77

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

Table 2: Musculoskeletal pain experiences of women Bus Conductors N=100

Body part	Very severe F (%)	Severe F (%)	Moderate F (%)	Mild F (%)	Very mild F (%)	Weighted Mean score
Neck	13 (13.00)	6 (6.00)	23 (23.00)	16 (16.00)	42 (42.00)	2.32
Shoulder	17 (17.00)	12 (12.00)	17 (17.00)	20 (20.00)	34 (34.00)	2.58
Upper back	17 (17.00)	18 (18.00)	19 (19.00)	20 (20.00)	21 (21.00)	2.75
Upper arms	14 (14.00)	8 (8.00)	18 (18.00)	12 (12.00)	48 (48.00)	2.28
Elbows	6 (6.00)	11 (11.00)	19 (19.00)	14 (14.00)	50 (50.00)	2.09
Lower back	23 (23.00)	15 (15.00)	31 (31.00)	10 (10.00)	21 (21.00)	3.09
Lower arms	12 (12.00)	11 (11.00)	22 (22.00)	6 (6.00)	49 (49.00)	2.31
Wrist	15 (15.00)	12 (12.00)	22 (22.00)	7 (7.00)	44 (44.00)	2.47
Palm/fingers	21 (21.00)	11 (11.00)	16 (16.00)	11 (11.00)	41 (41.00)	2.76
Thighs	36 (36.00)	17 (17.00)	14 (14.00)	7 (7.00)	26 (26.00)	3.3
Knees	42 (42.00)	18 (18.00)	12 (12.00)	10 (10.00)	18 (18.00)	3.56
Legs	52 (52.00)	14 (14.00)	13 (13.00)	8 (8.00)	13 (13.00)	3.84
Ankle /feet	49 (49.00)	17 (17.00)	10 (10.00)	8 (8.00)	16 (16.00)	3.75

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages

Table 3: Association between experience and musculoskeletal pain experience of women bus conductors N=100

Experience (years)	Musculoskeletal pain range			Total	χ^2
	Low <76	Medium 76-79	High >79		
<4	12 (27.3)	28 (63.6)	4 (9.1)	44 (44)	8.072**
4-8	21 (80.7)	3 (11.6)	2 (7.7)	26	
>8	4 (13.4)	19 (63.3)	7 (23.3)	30	
Total	37	50	13	100	

**significant at 0.01 % level

Conclusion

It can be concluded that women bus conductors express their difficulty in their work because of overload work and extension of working hours. Majority of the women bus conductors have severe musculoskeletal pain experiences in the legs, ankle/feet, knees, thighs, palm/fingers and in the wrist primarily generated primarily by constant standing, prolonged working hours.

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