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Dr. Rekha Verma
Assistant Professor,
Department of Family Resource
Management and consumer
Science, Ethelind College of
Home Science, Sam
Higginbottom University of
Agriculture, Technology &
Sciences, Allahabad,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Ranju Pandey
Research Scholar,
Department of Family Resource
Management and consumer
Science, Ethelind College of
Home Science, Sam
Higginbottom University of
Agriculture, Technology &
Sciences, Allahabad,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Rekha Verma
Assistant Professor,
Department of Family Resource
Management and consumer
Science, Ethelind College of
Home Science, Sam
Higginbottom University of
Agriculture, Technology &
Sciences, Allahabad,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Occupational stress and family difficulties faced by working women

Dr. Rekha Verma and Ranju Pandey

Abstract

Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key personal and family issue for many societies. The present study Occupational Stress and Family Difficulties faced by Working Women was undertaken with the objectives: to find out the background information of working women in household activities and to identify the constraints and stress management techniques adopted by the working women in household activities. The study was conducted in the Trans Yamuna area of Allahabad. The interview schedule was used for data collection and the sample size of the study was 150 working women. The analysis of the data was done by using frequencies, percentage. It is concluded that majority of the working women belonged to school and teaching staff category. A large percentage of the working women used to take joint decisions with their spouse in children matters, personal matters and household matters but in the aspects like religious practices, expenditure aspect, purchase of items and hygiene practices working women were taking independent decisions. It was found that the working women faced physical and mental stress. Working women were adopted the stress remedial techniques such as relaxation, correct posture, meditation, planning of the work and reducing responsibilities to manage their physical and mental stress.

Keywords: Working women, occupational stress, family difficulties

Introduction

Women contribute more than half of the duties and responsibilities of the family but are hardly empowered to participate in decision making. Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key personal and family issue for many societies. (Ford *et al.*, 2007) [4]. There are many facets in working mother's lives that subject to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis. Imbalance between work and family life arises due to a number of factors. Various factors appear to strengthen the brunt of pressure on women. They were not given any rights; they were supposed to do domestic work and to look after children. Gradually with the passage of time, the concept of "working women" came into existence. A working woman refers to women who work outside her home for a wage or salary. The participation of women in economic activities and their ability to contribute financially to the family can significantly increase their role in the household decision-making process.

Stress refers to the generalized, patterned, unconscious mobilization of the body's natural ability (Yahaya *et al.*, 2009) [2]. Stress at study is a growing problem for all workers, including women. Furthermore, in women levels of stress-related illness are nearly twice as high as for men (Abdullah *et al.*, 2008) [1].

Occupational stress defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirement of the job do not match the capabilities, or needs of the worker (AL-Hussami, 2008) [3].

Objectives

1. To find out the background information of working women in household activities.
2. To identify the constraints and stress management techniques adopted by the working women in household activities.

Materials and Methods

Locale of the study

The working and non-working women were selected from Trans Yamuna area in Allahabad to carry out the research work due to easy accessibility by the economic viability.

Selection of the population

A total number of 150 working women were purposively selected from the Trans Yamuna area in Allahabad.

Selection of respondents

Working women: A list of female workers working in different government organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private organizations such as school, college, bank, Life Insurance Corporation, hospital was prepared. The method used for selection of the working women was random sampling.

Instruments for Data Collection

The data in line with the objectives were collected with the help of interview schedule.

Prepared of interview schedule

An interview schedule was prepared in consultation with the

experts in the field and referring to the relevant literature on the subject. The schedule was divided into 3 parts:

1. First part was designed to study the background information of the respondents.
2. Second part was to know the decision making pattern of respondents in home activities.
3. Third part was difficulties faced by the working and non-working women.

Statistical Tools Used In the Study

The data collected from respondents were scored, tabulated and analyzed using suitable statistical methods. Mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages were used to interpret the categories of personal, social characters and extent of participation of respondents in home activities.

Result and Discussion

Background information of working and non-working women

Table 1 presented below shows that the background information of women who have working and non-working in Mahewa of Allahabad and distribution of working and non-working women according to their age, education, marital status, family size, family type and family income.

Table 1: Background information of working women.

S. No.	Variables	Working women (n=75)		
		Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Age (years)			
	25-35	25	33	
	35-45	30	40	
	45-55	15	20	
	55-65	5	7	
2.	Education			
	Primary School	-	-	
	Middle School	35	47	
	High School	30	40	
	Graduate	6	8	
	Post Graduate	4	5	
3.	Matial Status			
	Married	50	67	
	Un married	10	13	
	Widowed	8	11	
	Divorced	7	9	
4.	Family size			
	Small (< 5 member)	38	51	
	Medium (5-7 member)	22	29	
	Large (> 7 member)	15	20	
5.	Family type			
	Nuclear	55	73	
	Joint	20	27	
6.	Family income (Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry 15 Nov 2012)			
	High income group (above 3 lakhs per annum)	15	20	
	Middle income group (2 lakhs per annum)	20	26.66	
	Low income group (1-2 lakhs per annum)	40	53.33	

The data presented in table 1 showed that Majority of the working women 54.67percent were working in the school followed by college 12 percent and government organizations 20 percent. The women were working as supporting staff followed by teaching 26.67percent and administrators 13.33 percent. The working 40 percent women belonged to middle age group followed by young and old age group. Majority of the working women 47 percent were middle school education level holders and 5 percent working women were post

graduates. A large percentage of the working women 73 percent belonged to nuclear family and more than 27 percent working women belonged to joint family. The working women had medium level of income and 53 percent had low family income.

Employment details of working women

2 Employment details of working women

Table 2: Presented below shows that the employment details of working women according to their school, college, non-government organization and development departments.

Name of organization	N=75	Percentage
	Frequency	
Government Organization (schools, colleges, bank and hospitals)	50	66.67
Non-Government organizations (private schools, colleges, banks and NGO)	15	20
Development departments	10	13.33

Table 2 revealed that majority 66.67 percent of the women were working in Government Organization (schools, colleges, banks, hospital) non-government organization (NGO, schools, colleges, and banks) 20 percent and development departments 13.33 percent and college 12 percent.

Distribution of respondents according to their profession

Table 3 presented below shows that the distribution of respondent according to their profession likes administrators, teaching staff and supporting staff.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their profession

Name of profession	N=75	Percentage
	Frequency	
Administrator	10	13.33
Teaching staff	45	60
Supporting staff	20	26.67

Table 3 the women were working as teaching staff 60 percent, supporting staff 26.67 percent and very less percentage of the women were working as administrators 13.33 percent.

Difficulties faced by the respondents

Table 4: Personal and familial difficulties faced by the respondents.

S. No	Personal and familial difficulties	Working women(n=75)	
		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Personal and familial difficulties		
i	Neglecting of duties	50	71.43
		25	35.71
		38	54.29
a.	Children	66	94.29
b.	Household		
c.	Family members		
2.	Feeling tired due to long hours of work	50	71.43
3.	Non-cooperation of family members	42	60.00
4.	Do not get time to leisure sleep	35	50.00
5.	Became irritable and intolerance due to the strain of work feeling fatigued after work	30	42.86
6.	Feeling of insecurity	29	41.43
7.	Non-cooperation from husband	20	28.57
8.	Lack of communication facilities	20	28.57
9.	Over burden of work	4	5.71

*Multiple responses
Personal and familial difficulties

Working women

The data presented in Table 4 revealed that majority of the working 71.43 percent women expressed neglecting of duties of children as their main difficulties followed by not getting time for leisure sleep, personal care, entertainment and feeling fatigued after work. Table 4.5 highlights that nearly 95 percent of the working women were facing the difficulties of feeling tired due to long hours of work. Majority of the working women were facing the difficulties of non-cooperation from family members 71.43 percent. More than 40 percent of the women expressed feeling of insecurity as their difficulties. About 29 per cent of the working women were facing the difficulties of non-cooperation from husband and lack of communication facilities as their personal and familial difficulties whereas a very less percentage of the women faced the difficulties of over burden of work.

Occupational difficulties

Table 5: Occupational difficulties faced by the working women.

S. No.	Occupational Difficulties	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Over burden	15	20
2.	Long hours of work	25	33.33
3.	Problem during travels	35	46.66

The results presented in Table 5 indicates that various occupational difficulties faced by the working women in their work place. Around 46.66 percent of the women disclosed that they were facing problems during travelling. The probable reasons might be that they are staying far from the office. Since they belonged to medium income family which is unable to afford personal vehicles and less frequency of buses to reach the working place. 33.33 percent of the women faced the difficulties such as long working hours with limited payment and long hours of work with no stipulated time.

Stress remedial techniques

Table 6: Stress remedial techniques adopted by the respondent

S. No	Activities	Working women (n=58)		
		Full adoption	Partial adoption	No adoption
1.	Relaxation	42 (72.41)	16 (27.58)	-
2.	Correct Posture	8 (13.79)	35 (60.34)	15 (25.86)
3.	Meditation	35 (60.34)	22 (44.89)	1 (1.72)
4.	Social support	33 (56.89)	25 (51.02)	-
5.	Work Planning	33 (56.89)	25 (51.02)	-
6.	Reducing responsibilities	-	11 (22.44)	47 (81.03)

*Multiple Responses

Physical stress remedial techniques adopted by the respondents

The techniques followed by the respondents to manage their physical stress were relaxation, correct posture, diet, body therapy and medical therapy.

Relaxation

A close review of Table 6 revealed that majority of the 72.41 percent working women had full adopted taking relaxation whereas 27.58 percent women had partial adopted taking relaxation.

Correct posture

A look at the data in Table 6 demonstrates that nearly 70 percent of the working women had partially adopted change in posture in their activities to manage their physical stress.

Meditation

It becomes clearly evident from Table 6 that the 60.34 percent working women had adopted in doing meditation.

Social support

Information in Table 6 indicated that the working women had adopted social support towards working women 56.89 percent had partially adopted it.

Planning of the work

A close review of Table 6 revealed that majority of 53.44 percent of the working women were partially adopted it.

Reducing responsibilities

To manage mental stress, "postponing certain tasks" and "assign work to others" as stress management techniques were disagreed by the majority of the working women. With respect to change standards of job preference, 81.03 percent of the women were partially adopted it.

Conclusion

It is concluded that majority of the working women belonged to school and teaching staff category. A large percentage of the working women used to take joint decisions with their spouse in children matters, personal matters and household matters but in the aspects like religious practices, expenditure aspect, purchase of items and hygiene practices working women were taking independent decisions. It was found that the working women faced physical and mental stress. Working women were adopted the stress remedial techniques such as relaxation, correct posture, meditation, planning of the work and reducing responsibilities to manage their physical and mental stress.

Recommendation

The family members should be more supportive in household activities for the working women which may reduce the stress in their lives to some extent.

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