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The working women and stress management strategies

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Abstract

Globalization modernisation and unlimited urge to achievement lead to systematic pressure on lifestyle leading to stress. Recent researches in the field of health, organisational behaviour and sports psychology have indicated strong links between wellbeing, productivity and excellence with stress management. This article makes an attempt to list the reasons and symptoms of stress and how it influences an individual.

Keywords: Working women, occupational stress, family difficulties, stress management strategies

Introduction

Stress is the pattern of psychological and physiological reaction to demand in the environment that threatens us to devote a great deal of our resources to coping with the danger and defending ourselves.

According to Breznitz and Goldburger, 1982. "Stress is the most grandly imprecise term in the dictionary of science" [1]. It has sometimes been described as an increase in catecholamine levels, a change in eternal weight as a score on a life event scale a subjective section index (Steinberg and Ritzman, 1990) or cerebral section of a particular individual to a stimulus event" [2].

According to Dre Paul Rasch (1984) founder and President of the American institute of stress, point out:

Stress in addition to being itself, can also be the cause of itself and result of itself" [3]. According to Selye "It is the non-specific response of our body to a demand" [4], Selye (1976) himself stated that Stress = Problem inside and outside our body. Consider the following possible terms generated in response to the question" [5].

What does the word "Stress" mean to you"?

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Felling Nervous	Too much work	Upset Stomach
Felling Anxious	Too many responsibilities	Tension, headaches
Tense muscles	Too little lime	Noise neighbours
Rapid heart beat	Felling hopeless	Traffic jams
Family Problems	Felling bored	Inconsiderate people
Money Problem	Felling trapped	Feeling angry

Stress has very definite effect on

1. Physical well being
2. Psychological adjustments
3. Interpersonal relations
4. professional effectiveness

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. In the present period, women are actively contributing to the social and economic development of the country [7].

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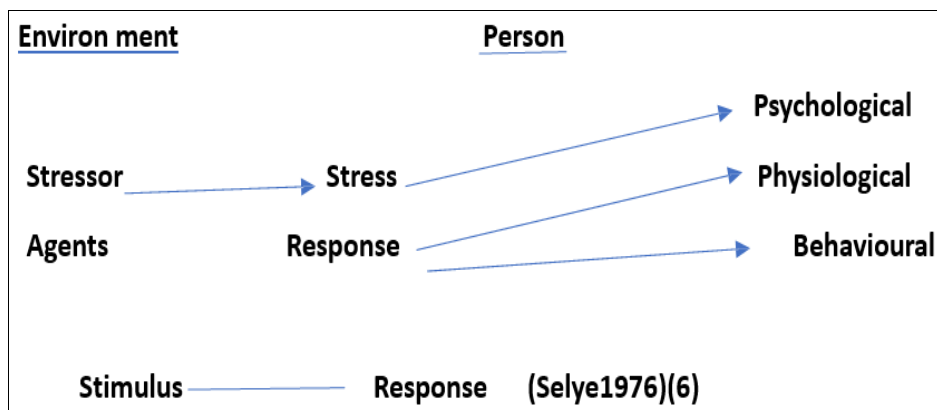


Fig 1: Depicts the increased participation of women in the workforce, driven by factors like urbanization and industrialization, as reflected by the rise in female literacy rates and labor engagement in both rural and urban sectors

Women now have more career options because to expanding urbanisation and industrialization, and they are entering the workforce in greater numbers. According to the 2011 census, India's female literacy rate has climbed to 65.46 percent, and the country's growing urbanization has resulted in higher rates of female labour engagement in the rural and urban sectors, respectively, of 26.1% and 13.8%, respectively [8]. Since decades, women have been seen as being in charge of the bulk of home tasks including cooking, cleaning, raising children, caring for the elderly, etc., while men were primarily responsible for providing for their families. These firmly defined gender roles, however, had to evolve as more and more women entered the labour and pursued jobs [9]. Unfortunately, as a result of what transpired, women today have more responsibilities than ever before, and they must manage the conflicting demands of their job and home responsibilities [10]. Around 64% of all family labour is performed by employed women, and as compared to married males, their involvement was especially significant when it comes to work done inside (78%) and childcare (67%). It is important to note that Kashmiri women, who live in a patriarchal culture, are also victims of this issue [11].

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) [12]. 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) [13]. 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) [14]. 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) [15].

Symptoms of stress

Stress can be measured in term of economic, financial loss, breakdown of relationship and above all personal distress. Overall, it leads to negative effects and is related to speed of life, philosophy of life, modernization and psychological attributes of the individual.

It is the keyed-up feeling, quite desperation, roller coaster experience, etc. Distress and feeling of not well-being, disease and mental health.

The following are the major symptom of stress

1. Inability to relax
2. Chronic worry
3. Excessive use of alcohol
4. Sleeplessness
5. Uncooperative
6. Lack of adjustability
7. Emotional instability (Tantrums)
8. Digestive problems, frequent idleness
9. High blood pressure
10. Nervousness and tension, nail biting
11. Headache and nausea, migraine
12. Rash of skin/arthritis/diabetes
13. Forgetfulness/lack of concentrations
14. Excessive fatigue
15. Terror/Paranoia 16-Hunger (sweets)

Stress related illness show up in mouth as: Ulcers

- **Cardiovascular system:** Heart attack, palpitation, hypertension (high blood pressure) and Angina, migraine, Haemorrhoids.
- **Digestive tract:** Colic, diarrhoea /constipation, indigestion and heartburns, ulcers, diabetes.
- **Reproductive organs:** Menstrual disorders(female) and impotence (male).
- **Lungs:** Asthma, coughs, dizziness, fainting, breathlessness/breathing-difficulties.
- **Hair:** Alopecia.
- **Skeletal-muscular system:** Muscular twitches, backache, tension, headache, arthritis, gnashing of teeth.
- **Bladder:** Irritability and need to urinate frequently and in
- **Skin:** Eczema, psoriasis.

Some of the major causes of stress are

Psychological, bio-ecological, personal social, economic and organizational. They are connected with the personality adjustment and the role of the individual effect of Nutrition, biorhythms, natural events, alienation an extreme climate also

enhances stress. In addition, the organisational climate, personal nagging and professional and value conflicts and above all lack of adjustment make the pressure unbearable.

Stressors faced by working women

Research shows that working women experience more guilt when they feel that they are not meeting role expectations in the familial life [16]. There are a number of problems that employed women are facing like:

There is always a battle against time for an employed woman. It becomes evidently difficult for her to maintain a work-family harmony; resulting no time to think about herself. This leads to ignorance about her health and makes them to suffer from different lifestyle diseases like obesity, depression, infertility, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases etc.

Occupational stress is caused by different conditions at workplace that negatively affect the overall wellbeing of a woman [17]. Like little control over work, role ambiguity and conflict with boss, poor relationships with coworkers and supervisors, heavy workload, job insecurity etc.

One of the stressors employed woman of Kashmiri patriarchal families find hardest is to come back home from work and do more work. It is worst to combat work stress and messy traffic to get home & knowing you have to cook, clean or deal with a pile of laundry without any helping hand [18].

Being unrecognized at work and overburdened at home, are not only hurdles women feel overwhelmed with. They face financial crisis too, as she is supposed to handover one half of salary to her family and another half, she is expecting to spent on daily expenses of family members like; medicine, grocery, cloths etc.

Demands of personal and professional lives, but employed women in particular, feel pressured. They don't even get time, to relax, to workout, have enough sleep etc. In every society, women are recognized as primary caregivers of children (UNDP, 1995). It is the responsibility of a mother to nurture and take care of her children at early age. However, due to hefty workload employed mothers are always short of time [19].

For most of the woman life definitely changes after marriage. Not only they embrace that change but make an effort to accept this change happily. They try their level best to be accepted in a new home and stay well behaved at all times. However, stressors begin to emerge if they land up in a family where they are expected to stay perfect in every matter of the life. Unsupportive family members are more likely to exert negative impact in the family, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the employed women.

Methods and Materials

The study includes 90 females of urban and rural area of Varanasi, Allahabad and Mirzapur. The study was conducted by personal interview and observation method. The pre designed questionnaire was used for the study which include the general information like age, sex, education, area, family size and personal information like height, weight, socio-economic condition, nutritional knowledge, intakes etc.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of data is based on 90 female of an urban and rural area of Varanasi, Allahabad and Mirzapur.

The result obtained and analyzed from the data is as follows: The finding reported in Table 1 indicated that 60% women of Allahabad were doing yoga, 16.67% were playing and 23.33% were taking rest for stressing free. In Mirzapur

50% of women were doing yoga, 26.67% women were playing and 23.33% were taking rest. In Varanasi 33.33% women were doing yoga, 13.33% women were playing and 53.33% were taking rest for against stress.

Table 1: Strategies against stress/prevention skills

Area	No. of women (N=90)	Yoga	Play	Rest
Allahabad	30	18(60%)	5(16.67%)	7(23.33%)
Mirzapur	30	15(50%)	8(26.67%)	7(23.33%)
Varanasi	30	10(33.33%)	4(13.33%)	16(53.33%)
Total	90	43	17	30

Table 2: Given time in yoga

Area	No of women (N=90)	15m/h	30/h	More than 30m
Allahabad	30	27.78%	44.45%	27.78%
Mirzapur	30	26.67%	53.35%	26%
Varanasi	30	20%	40%	40%

The finding reported in Table 2 indicated that 27.78% women of Allahabad were doing yoga till 15 m/h, 44.45% of women were doing it till 30 m/h and 27.78% were doing yoga for more than 30 m/h. In Mirzapur 26.67% of women were doing yoga till 15 m/h, 53.35% of women doing its 30 m/h and 26% women were doing yoga more than 30 m/h. In Varanasi 20% of women were doing yoga still 15 minute par hour 40% of women doing it 30 minute per hour and 40% of women doing yoga more than 30 minutes.

Table 3: Given time for rest

Area	No of women (N=90)	4 hours	5-6 hours	7-8 hours
Allahabad	30	20%	66.67%	13.35%
Mirzapur	30	26.67%	70%	3.35%
Varanasi	30	23.35%	60%	16.65%

The finding reported in Table 3 indicated that 20% women of Allahabad were taking rest till 4 hours, 66.67% of women taking rest till 5-6 hours and 13.35% of women taking the still 7-8 hours. In Mirzapur 26.67% of women taking rest till 4 hours, 70% of women taking rest till 5-6 hour and 3.35% of women taking rest till 7-8 hours. In Varanasi 23.35% women taking rest till 4hours, 60% of women taking rest till 5-6 hours and 16.65% women taking rest till 7-8 hours.

Suggestions

What can one do about stress

First, we must not make generalization, each of us has different limits, different optimum stress levels and perceive the source of stress differently. One person over stress is another's challenges and optimum stress.

Secondly, we need to differentiate between what we can do to equip ourselves and organise our environment to prevent becoming over or under stressed. We label this Prevention, yet however well we prepare ourselves and try to control our environment from time to time will still experience undesirable stress. It is then what we need to have develop management skills.

Prevention skills

Become knowledge about stress

Understand the process and effects of stress. Identify your major sources of stress. Anticipate stressful periods and plan for them. Find your optimum stress levels in all the areas of your life, be honest about what you really can cope with.

Keeping physically fit

Research consistently has demonstrated that the filter you are

the less likely you are to develop physical illness but also mental illness. If you are fit you have more energy to engaged the daily problem you encounter and more resilience when thing do not work out well.

Develop a style of life that with act as a buffer against the effect of stress

Drink in moderation fat a balanced diet, have a regular meal and always being the day with an adequate breakfast cut out to reduce smoking minimize you use of foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fats increase you intake maintain you recommended weight.

Manage your time

Determine your priorities distinguish between what must be done and what it would be desirable to do.

Be assertive

Develop the skill of asking what you want stating your preferences and saying 'no' to people and organization who demand too much of your time.

Develop and effective support system

Having people to turn to talk to and rely on has been shown to be perhaps the most significant factor in helping people minimize the occurrence an impact of stressor in their liars and on their health.

Have clear objective

Many of us end up doing too much inefficiently and too quickly. This is often because we have not stopped to ask ourselves what is that really want training ourselves what is that really want training oneself to think in terms of objective is crucial life skill. It does not refer to major like events but for all activities in our lives. How often to be right now and why do I want to do it?

Be clear about your values

Until you know what is important to you will find it difficult to set objectives for yourself.

Be systematic about making decisions and solving problems

Adopt yoga as a way of life to be stress free

Perform deep Breathing exercises, yoga, jogging and brisk walks.

Have some entertainment and fun, you will feel less overwhelmed by the stressors you face.

Have Balanced diet, as it helps to counter the impact of stress by fortifying the immune system.

You are important, care for your own body. A bot bath, sound body massage and other form of pampering re-energizes you and improve your emotional well-being.

A vital way to balance work and family stress is sound time management.

Conclusion

Women who work full-time today experience a rising level of stress. A person may have physical, psychological, and behavioural difficulties as a result of stress. Women who work show higher acute and chronic health issues as a result of this stress. It might be difficult to maintain stability in our lives and control stress. In order to overcome stress, one must first recognised how much it is affecting them and then use various coping mechanisms.

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