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RESEARCH PAPER

Study of Stress among Working and Non-Working Women in Relation to their Family Type

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Abstract

This paper is concerned to stress among working and non-working women in relation to their family type. Out of 22 districts of Punjab, one district was selected randomly for this study. Then 50 working women (25 from joint family and 25 from nuclear family) and 50 non-working women (25 from joint family and 25 from nuclear family) were selected randomly. Thus 100 women comprised with the sample for the present investigation. A standardized tool was used for conducting investigation. Stress scale by Dr. M. Singh (2002) was used for the collection of Data. The data were analysed statistically by using Mean, Co-relation and 't'-ratio.

Introduction

"Stress lies within us. It arises as a result of our reaction to worldly events. Once we stop reacting, we will no longer get stressed." Lord Buddha.

Stress is a common human phenomenon. Stress in a human results from a complex interaction between the events of life and perception of those events by an individual. The element of perception indicates the personality of an individual as the personalities of individual are distinctive. The reaction of stress is unique and personal to each of us. The response to stress varies with the individual's age, gender and genetic makeup. Stress is an individual's physical and mental reaction to environment, demand or pressure. It is with us all the time. It comes from mental or emotional activity as well as from physical activity. Stress condition is relative to nature. Extreme stress conditions are detrimental to human health but in modernization it is normal and in many cases prove useful in fact. Stress can be caused by any event or occurrence that a person considers a threat to his or her cope strategies or resources. Stress is a wide variety of dismissal situation that is capable of

producing the stress response such as efforts, pain, fear and even success. So stress is a product of bio-psychological aspect of human environment. As per bio-psychological model of stress, stress involves three components as internal components, external components and the interaction between the external and internal components.

These symptoms of stress can be either physical or psychological. Stress related physical illnesses such as irritable bowel syndrome, heart attack and chronic headaches, result from long term over stimulation of part of the nervous system that regulates the heart rate, blood pressure and digestive system. Human being responds to stress is complex and multi-dimensional. Stress affects an individual at several levels especially it affects humans psychologically and emotionally. Psychological effect of stress is associated with the onset of depression or anxiety. Stress may also be the risk factor for suicide. It is difficult to measure the quality and quantum and parameter and dimensions of stress. However, efforts are made and studies are conducted to know the level of stress and its causes among the people. We know that stress paralyses the human life on account of which it is difficult for the people suffering from stress to live the normal life. Life satisfaction and stress are interrelated with each other. Industrialization, urbanization and orientation have brought about the social transformation. With this more and more women acquire education, find out suitable jobs for the dual purpose of career building and economic support of the family. This is the symbolic of social transformation among people and social changing where more and more women prefer to come out of their homes and do the service. There are non-working women also who do not come out of their home for employment. It is too difficult to compare the life styles of working and non- working women as well as also difficult to compare the level of life satisfaction and the level of stress among them.

Stress is a negative consequence of modern living. People are stressed due to overwork, job insecurity, kinds of information, overloading with work and increase in pace of life. These events produce stress and deviation from healthy living. In the modern world, material goods and standard of living determine societal status of people. Gone are the days when aristocracy was based on birth in a certain family and such aristocracy was self-fulfilling. In the current culture, dual career couples definitely have an edge over those with whom only the male is an earning member. Higher income means a better quality of psychological and physical fulfillment of life aspirations of both spouses. However, this does not come without any cost. Dual career families face considerable stress and strain. One problem is related to their respective locations. Always priority is given to the husband's career and the wife's

career is accorded only secondary status. Another problem is decision regarding having a child. Many couples, including women, believe that child rearing would increase their domestic responsibilities and work as hindrance to their working life. These problems become even more crucial if the family is a nuclear one. According to Lai (1995) work and family are the two major role domains for the adults. Studies have generally showed that stressors embedded in work or family role are detrimental to psychological wellbeing. The permeable boundaries between work and family roles induce stress spill over from one domain to the other.

There are three ways in which one's role could be incompatible with each other. Time spent in one role, may leave little time for other role. Husband may feel that it is against their masculinity to perform house hold duties. Mothers feel guilty when they are unable to take care of their family responsibilities. Despite, most men and women are not clear about the social roles and the concept of sharing in the family system. So life in such a situation results in work family issues which ultimately lead to stress.

We live in stressful time. We are holding down two or more jobs. We are putting up with heavy job loads and unreasonable demands. These stressors are the barely tolerable pressures that bring us unhappiness and eventually diseases. Some people hardly seem to be affected by stressors but some other people are overwhelmed by a lesser number and intensity of stressors and slide downhill, losing relationship, jobs and eventually their mental and physical health. The physiological and psychological responses to situation or events that disturb the equilibrium of an organism constitute stress. Stress is little consensus among psychologist about the exact definition of stress. It is agreed that stress results when demands placed on an organism cause unusual physical or emotional responses. In humans, stress originates from a multitude of sources and causes a wide variety of responses both positive and negative. Despite its negative connotation, many experts believe some level of stress is essential for wellbeing and mental health. The present status of women whether working and non- working, can be illustrated using some recent data on the working and non-working women culture.

STRESS

Stress is defined as the state of psychological upset or disequilibrium in human beings caused by frustrations, conflicts and other internal as well as external strains and pressures in second sense, stress is regarded as a class of stimuli which threatens an individual in some way and thus causes disturbance in one's behaviour. Thus, stresses are the factors or causes

that lead to maladjustment and disorganization of one's behavior. Stress as a word mean "to draw tight" and has been used to describe hardship, affliction, force, pressure, strain or strong effort. It has been recognized as an external load or pressure supplied on the individual and viewed as person's response of the behaviour.

Dimensions of Stress

1. Positive Dimension: The positive dimension of stress is called *estrus*. For example an artist trying to create best piece of his life is under some sort of stress but the outcome is creativity. Estrus can lead to creativity and productivity.

2. Negative Dimension: If stress is of a very severe nature, lasting longer and may threaten to damage the organism, it may result in negative dimension of the stress. It leads to deterioration in performance and stress induced disorders like hypertension, diabetes and acidity.

Sources of Stress

1. Frustration: A wide range of environmental obstacles, both physical and social and the internal factors in the form of personal limitations, biological conditions and social and the internal frustration of our needs, motive and efforts.

2. Conflicts: Conflicts of motives and desires may also cause frustration and stress situations. In choosing of either alternative from the contradictory needs, a person may be forced to postpone a decision for days, weeks or perhaps months before he/she decided what to do. This is essentially true where a considerable felling of guilt is involved.

3 Pressure: Apart from frustrations and conflicts, internal as well as external pressures also prove a major source of causing stress.

(i) Internal pressure: Internal pressures are caused by our own self for maintaining the picture of ourselves- as we think we could and should be. We strive hard to reach the top, to achieve success and in doing so put an unreasonable pressure on ourselves.

(ii) Environmental pressures: The environmental demands, social obligations, family responsibilities and demands of the person who concern us and the problems of complexities of life exert a good deal of pressure.

Working Women

Working women are those who work outside the home and contribute to family income. They are engaged in different vocations such as education, nursing, administration, courts,

factories etc. A working woman knows the importance of reading besides her job and the house hold chores. She tries her best to squeeze out some time and gives it to reading. It helps her to know about the up to date ideas of her job, helps her to maintain her home, family and personality. Working women rely on the use of domestic help or on mechanical labor saving device to aid their cooking and housekeeping chores. Working women appear to seek solution for saving time spent in shopping; emphasis by retailers on speed of service and home delivery service could prove on attractive selling point of them. Working women cannot pay full attention to their home and are unable to satisfy their family members. Working women cannot properly adjust with their married life because they have many tasks to perform at a time. Working women found themselves moving from job to job under a frequently changing cast of bosses. Working women solve their problems; marital maladjustment and it also help them in bringing up their children properly.

Non -Working Women

Generally these women remain within the four walls of the home. They do not go outside to earn livelihood. They have no contribution to the family income. These women can be educated and uneducated also. Non-working woman is a housewife. She has a plenty of work to do such as cooking, washing, shopping, take care of the family, looking after the children and so on. Non-working women have more free time as compared to working women. But they do not have interest in reading. Many of them usually waste their time in gossiping, sleeping and kitty parties etc.

The dual roles of the wife in her employment and in the home imply that the degree of involvement in various homemaker roles such as chief cook, mother, and house keeper will differ from the non- working wife for whom such roles are the focal point of her existence. This does not necessarily imply rejection of homemaker roles by the working wife, but rather that she seeks other opportunities for self-fulfillment in activities outside the home. Consequently the time and effort devoted to homemaker roles, as well as concepts of appropriate behaviour in these roles may differ from those of the non- working wife. Stimulation received from involvement in a job may also generate greater interest in non-working wife. Nonetheless, working wives and equally non-working wives may not all have similar attitudes toward home-making? Motivations for working or for not working differ. Some women work primarily from financial necessity and remain predominantly involved in homemaker roles. Equally some non- working women solve frustration with the domestic routine by involvement in non-paid social and charitable activities rather than paid

employment. Consequently they are open to an equally wide sphere of contacts and relationships as working women and may have as little time or energy to devote to household duties.

Daily life factors that contribute to women stress

1. Sense of control: According to the survey 51 percent of women with children at home feel a strong need for control over their daily lives. Interestingly, almost twice as many empty nesters feel comfortable with their lives and the amount of control they have over daily occurrences. The lack of control over the minute to minute chaos that fills each day, especially for those with children at home may be a leading stress trigger.

2. 'Me' Time: Empty nesters are more likely to pursue hobbies and take preventative health measures, according to the survey, which may be important factors in reducing stress levels. Women with children at home are helping with homework and school activities, which add to the daily workload. Family time, exercise, home decorating and hobbies are most frequently chosen in that order by these women as things they would like to do.

FAMILY

Family is defined as a group of persons who consider themselves stable unit and are related to one another by blood, marriage, adoption or a consensual decision to live together and who provide emotional and financial support for members.

Types of family

1. Joint Family.
2. Nuclear Family.

(1) Joint Family

A joint family includes the mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandfather, grandmother, cousins is called joint family. A joint family comprises members of the family that are related to one another and share a common ancestry, religion and property. All the working members of the family pool together what they earn. The idea is socialistic in character. The joint family system is a feature of agriculturist societies. These are in existence in countries as China and India whose economy is based on agricultural produce. Collective living, collective fanning and collective share in family wealth are the traditional features of the joint family. The joint family has a number of advantages. However, it does not always work. When many people of different mentality and disposition live under one common

roof, negative human traits are bound to crop up. Members then have a tendency to stress on their rights and ignore their duties. When this kind of attitude prevails, the atmosphere is not conducive to peace and harmony. Joint property goes hand in hand with the joint family. When the joint family's property is divided, the joint family gets dismembered. Today technical skill is acquired in professional fields by training in technical institutions. It needs not be passed on from generation to generation.

(2)Nuclear Family

A Nuclear family includes only the husband, wife, unmarried children who are not of age is called nuclear family. Quite often the persons living in nuclear families have a feeling of insecurity. In a nuclear family a working mother tries her best to strike a balance between service and household chores. At the same time she tries to be a good mother and a good wife. However, the joint system may at time prove a hindrance to individual enterprise and initiative. The majority of single parent families are more commonly single mother family than single father. These families face many difficult issues besides the fact that they have to rear their children on their own, but also have to deal with issues related to low income.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The present age is often known as the age of stress and strain. Stress is, by and large, a modern phenomenon. The blind race for achieving economic and career goals without caring for means is indeed a widespread phenomenon of contemporary life. This leads to a host of stressful situations, which cause a serious damage to our mental wellbeing. The growing magnitude of violence, display of aggression by youth of today, and the declining standards of tolerance and patience obviously breed stress situations. Economic deprivation also contributes a good deal to human stress. The nature of work is changing rapidly. Perhaps now more than ever before, job stress poses a threat to the health of workers and, in turn, to the health of organization.

With the changing time, now a day's women are moving ahead trying keep pace with men. Today women have excelled men in several areas of working and there is hardly any field where women are not working. But a working woman also has to face many problems. Stress has become a major concern of modern time as it can cause harm to the health and performance of the working and non-working women too. Various surveys conducted in different fields have proved the truth of the statement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Study of stress among working and non-working women in relation to their family type.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1) Stress

Stress is the reaction on people having excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them.

2) Working Women

Working women are those who work outside their home and contribute to family income, at times working on a fixed salary at a fixed place for a fixed period of time.

3) Non-Working Women

Non-working women are those who generally stay at home and do not work on a fixed salary at fixed place for a fixed period of time.

4) Nuclear Family

The nuclear family refers to a household consisting of father, mother and their children, all in one household dwelling.

5) Joint Family

Joint family is that where more than two generation of the same kinship line live together, either in the same dwelling or in adjacent dwelling. The extended family can be very large; it may contain several adult offspring of the head of the family, together with all their spouses and children.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the stress among working women belonging to joint family.
2. To study the stress among working women belonging to nuclear family.
3. To study the stress among non -working women belonging to joint family.
4. To study the stress among non-working belonging to nuclear family.
5. To compare the stress among working and non-working women.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following hypotheses:

1. There is no stress among working women from joint family.
2. There is no stress among working women from nuclear family.
3. There is no stress among non-working women from joint family.
4. There is no stress among non-working women from nuclear family.
5. There exists no significant difference between stresses among working and non-working women.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to working and non-working women belonging to district of Ludhiana (Punjab).

METHOD

The present investigation has adopted Descriptive Survey method.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Out of 22 districts of Punjab, one district Ludhiana was selected randomly to conduct the study. 50 working women (25 from joint family and 25 from nuclear family) and 50 non-working women (25 from joint family and 25 from nuclear family) were selected randomly. Thus, 100 women comprised the sample for the present investigation.

TOOL USED

The standardized tool was used for the present investigation: Stress scale by Dr. M. Singh (2002).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The statistical techniques were used to analyze the data: Mean, Standard deviation and t-test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis-1: There is no stress among working women from joint family.

TABLE -1

Stress level percentage on the scores of working women from joint family

| Sample | No. | %age of stress level of working women from joint family | Stress Level |
|---------------------------------|-----|---|--------------|
| Working Women from Joint family | 25 | 61% | High |
| | | 39% | Low |

It may be observed from the table 1 that the percentage of stress level of working women from joint family is found to be 61 percent which shows the high level of stress. Thus the data provides sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis (1). The working women from joint family have high level of stress which may be due to the workload at both personal and professional level. The above finding is in tune with Rosa (2005).

Hypothesis-2: There is no stress among working women from nuclear family.

TABLE-2

Stress level percentage on the scores of working women from nuclear family

| Sample | No. | %age of stress level of working women from nuclear family | Stress Level |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---|--------------|
| Working Women from Nuclear family | 25 | 80% | High |
| | | 20% | Low |

It may be observed from the table 2 that the percentage of stress level of working women from nuclear family is found to be 80 percent which shows the low level of stress. Thus the data did not provide sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis (2). The working women from nuclear family have low level of stress. The above finding is in tune with Upmanyu (2000).

Hypothesis-3: There is no stress among non-working women from joint family.

TABLE-3

Stress level percentage on the scores of non- working women from joint family

| Sample | No. | %age of stress of level of non-working women from joint family | Stress Level |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|--------------|
| Non-Working Women from Joint family | 25 | 52 | High |
| | | 48 | Low |

It may be observed from the table 3 that the percentage of stress level of non-working women from joint family is found to be 52 percent which shows the low level of stress. Thus the data did not provide sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis (3). The above finding is in tune with Aujla (2004).

Hypothesis-4: There is no stress among non-working women from nuclear family.

TABLE-4

Stress level percentage on the scores of non-working women from nuclear family

| Sample | No. | %age of stress of level of non-working women from nuclear family | Stress Level |
|---------------------------------------|-----|--|--------------|
| Non-Working Women from Nuclear family | 25 | 60% | High |
| | | 40% | Low |

It may be observed from the table 4 that the percentage of stress level of non-working women from nuclear family is found to be 60 percent which shows the low level of stress. Thus, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to reject the hypothesis (4). The above finding is in tune with Devi and Rayalu (2002).

Hypothesis-5: There exists no significant difference between stresses among working and non-working women.

The difference in stress in working and non-working women was identified from joint and nuclear family.

TABLE-5

| | Mean | SD | N | D | $\sum D$ | t-ratio |
|-------------------|-------|-------|----|------|----------|---------|
| Working women | 26.44 | 14.79 | 50 | 3.06 | 4.39 | 0.69 |
| Non-working women | 23.38 | 7.39 | 50 | | | |

The analysis of Table 5 showed that there was no significant difference between the working and non-working women from joint and nuclear family as null hypothesis Ho5 is rejected at both levels of significances .01 and .05. The above finding is in tune with Lee and Beatty (2002)

MAIN FINDINGS

The whole march of investigation with all the efforts found the way out to suggest and draw the relating education implication from the study. It also tried to unite the drawback that a woman usually experience during her pains taking efforts. The main finding of the study are given below:

1. Working women from Joint Family have more level of stress.
2. Working women from Nuclear Family have low level of stress.
3. Non-Working Women from Joint Family have low level of stress.
4. Non-Working Women from Nuclear Family have low level of stress.
5. There exists no significant difference between stress in Working and Non-Working Women.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Stress is a normal part of everyday life and occurs whenever our bodies and minds are faced with tax or exceed our capacity to respond. These demands can be physical or mental. All stress is both mental and physical, because the mind and body are not separate but are two subsystems of our very complex whole. There are several interpersonal situations causing stress. The expansion of education, there seems to be a change in the present scenario. There should be some measures which could prove beneficial in coping with stress in working and non-working women. There should be phased and collective responsibility of work. Expectation of working and non-working women should not exceed the available resources and material conflict at the work place should be resolved. There should be proper management at home and work place as well.

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