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Research Article

A COMPARATIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF STRESS AMONG WORKING AND NON WORKING WOMEN

Johny Kutty Joseph

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi College of Nursing Kakryal, katra, 182320

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ABSTRACT

Background: Stress affects not only our physical health but our mental well being, too. To successfully manage stress in everyday lives, individual can learn to relax and enjoy life. The best way to manage stress is to prevent it. This may not be always possible. So, the next best things are to reduce stress and make life easier. Stress refers to any environmental, organizational and individual or internal demands, which require the individual to readjust the usual behavior pattern. Degree of stress results from events or situations that have potential to cause change. Stimuli or situations that can result in the experience of stress are called stressors. There are three major sources of stress environmental, individual and organizational.

Objectives of the Study

- ✓ To assess the level of stress among working women.
- ✓ To assess the level of stress among non working women.
- ✓ To compare the level of stress between working and non working women.
- ✓ To associate the level of stress among working women with selected demographic variables.
- ✓ To associate the level of stress among non working women with selected demographic variables.

Methodology: The conceptual framework used in the study is Pender's health Promotional Model. The research design adopted for the present study was descriptive design. The study was conducted in Bangalore. Non probability Purposive Sampling technique was used. The sample comprised of 30 working women and 30 non working women. A self structured questionnaire consists of two sections A & B. section A consists of demographic profile and Section B consists of 60 open ended questions to assess the level of stress among women.

Result: The overall mean of the level of stress was 104.53 (\pm 6.653) for working women and 145.83 (\pm 8.76) for non working women. The calculated 't' value was 20.57 which was statistically significant at $P < 0.001$. There was significant association of level of stress with the demographic variable 'occupation' for both working and non working women which was statistically significant at $P < 0.001$.

Interpretation and Conclusion: The study concluded that there was significant difference between the levels of stress among working and non working women. The study revealed that working women need to have guidance on effective stress management measures.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is an inevitable and unavoidable component of life due to increasing complexities and competitiveness in living standards. Stress is a state of disequilibrium that occurs when there is a disharmony between demands occurring within an individual's internal or external environment and his/ her ability to cope with that demands.¹ India being a predominantly rural country with a population of more than 1 billion people has access to cheap labor. Looking back at the Indian

population and labor literature, India has grown at an annual rate of 2.27 percent in urban areas and 0.66 per cent in rural areas. The public and private sectors account for majority of the employment in India. Out of the total employment, the public sector has enjoyed about 70% of the organized employment which is seen as a decrease from the year 1991. Unemployment rates in India are high and more so in the rural areas (7.86%) as compared to the urban areas (3.86%).² Housewife is the most neglected occupation. There are certain specific conditions that might lead to some special kind of

*Corresponding author: Johny Kutty Joseph
SMVD Narayana Hospital Campus, Kakryal, Katra, J&K, India

stress in women; these conditions include pregnancy, menopause and familial strife.³ In the present era in industrialized countries, the majority of women work outside the home, either part-time or full-time. Working women with children living at home differ from women with no children and from their own working spouses or partners living in the same home in several ways. The working mothers report greater stress due to conflicting demands between paid work and responsibilities at home. Perceived control over unpaid work at home is reduced among working mothers compared with other working women or to working fathers.

An increasing number of women nowadays are faced with the task of juggling the roles of mother and employee. It is found that women who work outside the home are faced with a second shift or additional working month of 24 hours per annum compared to working men with children.⁴ The married women performed around 64% of the total amount of household work and that their contribution as compared to married men was particularly high when it came to work indoors (78%) and childcare (67%).⁵ Incompatibility between work and family life arises due to a number of factors. 'Work-family spillover' may also occur due to having to juggle multiple roles, and may result when the pressures from work have an effect on one's attitude and behavior within the family.⁶ Working mothers, regardless of whether they are single or married, face higher stress levels and adverse health effects. Stress in working mothers has the compounded negative effect of potentially causing stress symptoms in their children. *The Indian workplace is rapidly changing in accordance with the economic conditions, technology, corporate employment practices and demographic trends of the country. Globalization has had strong implications on the attitudes of women, their work and health.* According to the Clinical interviews by general practitioners states that housewives were 1.4% had evident learning disability 1.2% had epilepsy and 0.6% psychotic disorders. It also that 21% of the sample experience depressive symptoms, 20.8% anxiety symptoms, 17.9% somatic symptoms and 14.2% social dysfunctional symptoms due to stress.⁷ A study shows that a fifth of population under survey (21% range 20.5-21.5%) had mental disorder. The figure for women was 1.7 times that for men (29% v.15.8%) Data regarding prevalence of mental disorders in terms of gender, place of residence, age, marital status, education and occupation.⁸ Hence this study was designed to compare the stress level of working and non working women with following objectives and with a view to provide information booklet on stress management.

1. To assess the level of stress among working women.
2. To assess the level of stress among non working women.
3. To compare the level of stress between working and non working women.
4. To associate the level of stress among working women with selected demographic variables.
5. To associate the level of stress among non working women with selected demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A non experimental descriptive (comparative) design was adapted in this study to assess and compare the stress of working and nonworking women. The study was conducted in

selected rural and urban villages of Bangalore. The sample consisted of 60 women out of which 30 were working and 30 were nonworking. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used in the study to select the sample. Self structured questionnaire to assess the level of stress was used in this study. Tools were prepared on the basis of objectives of the study, review of the literature. The tool consisted of two parts: Part A consisted of demographic data of the women and Part B consisted of 60 open ended questions to assess the level of stress among women. There are two types of questions in Section B Positive worded questions and Negative worded questions. Scoring key for the positive worded questions was such that the inference 'always' carries 3 marks, 'occasionally' carries 2 marks and 'never' carries 1 mark each. Scoring key for the negative worded questions was such that the inference 'always' carries 1 mark, 'occasionally' carries 2 marks and 'never' carries 3 marks each. The minimum score was 60 and maximum score was 180. Totally there are 24 positive worded questions and 36 negative worded questions. Thus a total of 180 marks were awarded for section B and to interpret the level of stress the scores were distributed as High level of stress (< 60%), Moderate level of stress (60 – 75%) and accepted level of stress (>75%). The pilot study was conducted and the reliability of the instrument was 0.7. The instrument was validated before proceeding for data collection. Data was collected, entered, analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics, frequency tables, spearman's rank correlation, unpaired t-test, and Chi-square.

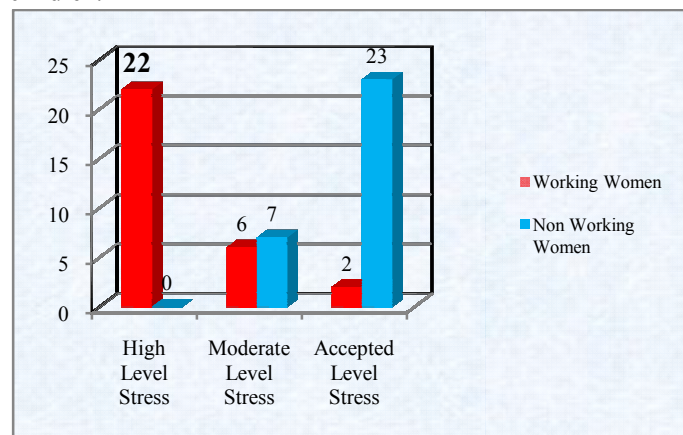
For this study, the investigator took into consideration the ethical issues. No ethical issues were raised while conducting the study. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the institutional ethical committee. An informed consent was obtained from working and nonworking women. Assurance was given to them that all the information will be kept confidential. The data collection period was for 20 days. Everyday data was collected from 5 to 6 study participants. Data collection procedure and purpose of the study was explained and verbal consent was obtained. Attempts were made to establish good rapport to gain confidence and co operation from the subjects. Questionnaire was given to the sample after explanation and time period 30-40 minutes was given for answering the questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the working and non working women were analyzed as per the plan for data analysis which included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. The findings were organized and presented such as Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables, Level of stress among working and non working women, Comparison of level of stress among working and non working women and Association of level of stress among working and non working women with selected demographic variables. Demographic characteristics revealed that among 30 working women there were 9 (30%) below 25 years of age, 8 (26.7%) were between 25 to 30 years of age, 6 (20%) were between 31 to 35 years of age and 7 (23.3%) were between 36 to 40 years of age. It also revealed that among 30 non working women there were 16 (53.3%) below 25 years of

age, 8 (26.7%) were between 25 to 30 years of age, 3 (10%) were between 31 to 35 years of age and 3 (10%) were between 36 to 40 years of age. Regarding the educational qualification of working women there were 4 (13.3%) having primary level of education, 2 (6.7%) were upper primary, 4 (13.3%) were higher secondary, 17 (56.7%) were graduates and 3 (10%) were post graduate and more. Regarding the educational qualification of non working women there were 4(13.33) are illiterate 0 (0%) having primary level of education, 3 (10%) were upper primary, 21 (70%) were higher secondary, 5 (16.7%) were graduates and 1 (3.3%) was post graduate and more. Further it reveals about the religion such that among 30 working women 23 (76.7%) were belonging to Hindu religion, 1 (3.3%) belongs to Muslim religion and 6 (20%) were belonging to Christian religion. None were belonging to any other religion. Among 30 non working women 15 (50%) were belonging to Hindu religion, 2 (6.7%) were belonging to Muslim religion and 13 (43.3%) were belonging to Christian religion. None were belonging to any other religion. Regarding the type of family among 30 working women 6 (20%) belonged to Joint Family and 24 (80%) belonged to Nuclear Family. None belonged to any other type of family. Among 30 non working women 2 (6.7%) belonged to Joint Family and 28 (93.3%) belonged to Nuclear Family. None belonged to any other type of family.

With regard to family income among the 30 working women 7 (23.3%) were having an income of less than 5000, 10 (33.3%) were having 5000 – 10000, 10 (33.3%) were having 10000 – 15000 and 3 (10%) were having an income of more than 15000 per month. Among the 30 non working women none were having an income of less than 5000, 7 (23.3%) were having 5000 – 10000, 22 (73.3%) were having 10000 – 15000 and 1 (3.3%) were having an income of more than 15000 per month. Regarding the nature of work among 30 working women 13 (43.3%) were sedentary workers, 12 (40%) were moderate workers and 5 (16.6%) were heavy workers. Among 30 non working women 1 (3.3%) was sedentary worker, 28 (93.3%) were moderate workers and 1 (3.3%) were heavy workers. Further regarding the number of children among the 30 working women 21 (70%) were with one child, 6 (20%) were with two children and 3 (10%) were with more than two children. Among the 30 non working women 2 were not having children, 16 (53.3%) were with one child, 11 (36.7%) were with two children and 1 (3.3%) was with more than two children.



The finding of the study with regard to level of stress among working and non working women revealed that among 30

working women 22 (73.3%) were having high level of stress, 6 (20%) were having moderate level of stress and 2 (6.7%) were having accepted level of stress. Further it also shows that among 30 non working women 0 (0%) were having high level of stress, 7 (23.3%) were having moderate level of stress and 23 (76.7%) were having accepted level of stress.

Moreover, while comparing the level of stress among working and non working women it was found that much variation is present in the level of stress among the said groups. The below given table shows the detailed comparison of level of stress among working and non working women.

Sr. No.	Dimensions of Stress	Working Women		Non Working Women		Unpaired t – test value
		Mean Score	SD	Mean Score	SD	
1	Perception of Self	12.3	2.08	17.4	1.8	10.16
2	Perception of Others	11.13	1.4996	16.8	2.4953	10.67
3	Role Performance	29.17	3.661	39.77	4.256	10.34
4	View about Life	11.8	2.4819	17.03	1.905	9.16
5	Life Style Practices	11.73	2.1746	16.63	2.373	8.34
6	Social Relationship	10.77	2.7408	14.2	2.135	5.41
7	Financial Status	9.03	1.871	11.9	2.039	5.68
8	Coping Ability	8.6	1.93	12.1	2.08	6.76
9	Overall	104.53	6.6527	145.83	8.76	20.57

It is revealed that working and non working women have calculated value of level of stress related to perception of self, perception of others, role performance, view about life, life style practices, social relationship, financial status and coping ability are 10.16, 10.67, 10.34, 9.16, 8.34, 5.41, 5.68 and 6.76 which is higher than the table value and the p value is significant at 0.001 level of significant. The overall mean of working women is 104.53(SD 6.6527) is much lower than the overall mean of non working women 145.83 (SD 8.76) which indicate that working women are having high level of stress. The calculated value for unpaired “t” test was 20.565 and it is much higher than the table value and the p value is significant at 0.001 level. Hence the hypothesis H₁ which says that there will be significant difference in level of stress between working and non working women is accepted and retained.

Chi-square test was used to find out the association between the level of stress and selected demographic variable. The association with occupation was ($\chi^2 = 22.4$) in case of working women and ($\chi^2 = 7.5$) in case of non working women. The calculated chi-square value is greater than the table value. It is statistically highly significant at P= <0.001 level of significance. Hence there is association between the level of stress and occupation. Hence the Hypothesis H₂ which states that “there will be a significant association of level of stress among working women and non working women with selected demographic variables” is accepted and retained for ‘occupation’ and for other demographic variables H₂ is rejected and detained.

This study is supported by a study done in 2004 by P. Aujla, Harshpinder and P. Sandhu about stress among working women and causative environmental factors which says that working women are having more level of stress due to different

environmental factors.⁹ This study is also supported by Usha R. Rout, Cary L. Cooper, Helen Kerslake, (1997) who have done a comparative study on stress among working women and housewives proves that house wives are having comparatively lower level of stress as a result of mental diversions.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

The study reveals working and non working women are having different levels of stress. Stress is an inseparable part of human existence. It affects all individuals rich and poor, literate and illiterate, both men and women and young and the old alike across the developed and developing nations. Stress and its effects on humans has been well understood and attempts are constantly being made to promote the well being of them by organizing stress management programs at periodic intervals in both Governmental and Non Governmental sectors. Stress management has acquired particular importance in the Twenty First century mainly due to two important reasons. Ill health is very expensive and prevention of ill health is potentially possible by using health promotion strategies like stress management.¹¹

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