



STRESS AMONG THE MARRIED WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

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Introduction

Although, the 21st century presents us with a social scenario where women employed in various fields, nonetheless, family responsibilities are still considered to be their primary responsibility. Women can view these roles as challenges, or they can perceive them as threats. As demand increase at different stages of family life cycle to fulfill these roles, women often fear a sense of losing control, and a sense of helplessness, making them prone to stress and burn out, unless they learn to cope the problems they face. Stress is the physiological reaction which occurs when people perceive an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon them and their capability to meet those demands. As stress increases, women develop learning signs in multiple areas giving them the sense that their lives are out of balance. Taking a personal stress profile to identify these signs is the first step in managing stress – these signs can be categorized as follows:

1. Physical – Headache, tension, Insomnia, fatigue signs appetite change etc.
2. Emotional Sign – Anxiety, anger, unhappiness, irritability, depression, frustration etc.
3. Mental Signs – Forgetfulness, constant worry, inability to make decision, negative thinking, boredom etc.
4. Social – Lack of intimacy, isolation, family problems, marital conflict, loneliness etc.
5. Spiritual Signs – Apathy, loss of meaning, emptiness, unforgiving doubt, guilt, despair etc.

Stress thus effects health and can be fatal to life. Women need to understand stress and recognise these signs and adopt coping skills and stress management techniques to prevent stress. There are many proven techniques that can be used to manage stress.

Keeping in mind the stressful situation of working women a study entitled “Stress management practices among married women working in Guwahati City” was conducted with the following objectives.

Aims & Objectives

1. To find out the stressors perceived by the married working women,
2. To study the existing practices of married working women in respect to stress management and
3. To suggest appropriate strategies for coping with stress and its management.

Materials and Methods

A sample size of 225, comprising married women working within Guwahati city in three different types of Institutions viz. Educational, Financial and Healthcare Institutions were randomly selected for the purpose. Descriptive research method was employed and a questionnaire was developed by the researcher. Pre-testing of the instrument was conducted on 30 married working women from the non-sampling area to test the validity of the tool. The obtained data were subjected to statistical analysis using percentage analysis.

Results and Discussion

Stressors Perceived by the Respondents

The various stressors confronted by the married working women were financial, temporal, physical, emotional, social and occupational. However, the degree of responses varied with woman to woman.

I. Financial Stressors

It was found that majority of the working women had to support their families financially at the time of festivals, sudden illness of any family members and for extra curricular activities which make them financially stressed.

II. Physical and Temporal Stressors

Table: Frequency Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Physical and Temporal Stressors Causing Stress

N = 225

Stressors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Double burden at workplace and home	140	62.2
2. Need to look after young children at home	101	45
3. Need to look after old person at home	51	22.6
4. Need to do marketing for home	157	70

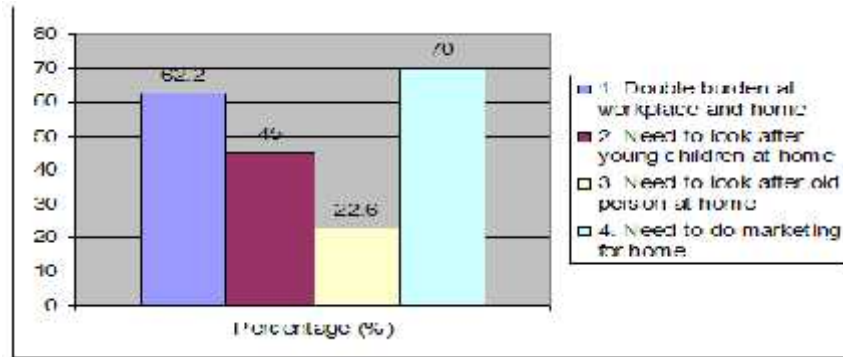


Figure: Frequency Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Physical and Temporal Stressors Causing Stress

The Table above deals with various factors which causes physical and temporal stress. It was found that majority of respondents (70%) had to do marketing chores along with occupational tasks. Similarly, 62.2 percent of respondents reported of suffering from double burden at work place and home. It was reported that 45 percent of respondents had very young children to look after inspite of their busy schedule of work and 22.6 percent said that they had to look after elderly family members at home.

III. Emotional and Social Stressors

There are various emotional and social factors, (stressors) such as demise of the husband, no child, demise of child, conflict with colleagues/friends/family members, social hardship, role conflict between home and workplace and fear of being exploited that affect the working women. It was reported that 57 percent of respondents suffered from role conflict between home and at work place followed by conflict with colleagues, friends, family members & relatives (25%).

IV. Occupational Stressors

There are few occupational stressors like job insecurity, job aptitude conflict, insult / abuse at work place which had more or less affected the working women.

Strategies to Cope Up with Stress and Stress Management Skills

While analyzing the Stress Management practices among the respondents, it was revealed that they had individual coping styles to overcome the stressful situation. Majority of women (70%) used separate provision for saving to meet the needs at the time of emergency followed by (66%) taking loans to cope with financial stressors whereas to deal with the physical and temporal stressor, majority of them (86%) uses labour saving devices, and manage time for taking rest (71%). Again, majority of the working women (84%) visualize the good side of everything to minimize emotional and social stress. Occasionally they are found to take leave from workplace and go for vacation to get relief from occupational stress. Stress management skills adopted by them included physical exercises, walk, gym, spiritual practices etc. Humour and laughter was also found as a source to reduce stress.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that married working women encounters many stressors in her day to day life, leading to various behavioural and health problems among them. They adopt various measures to cope with stress and follow different healthy habits to manage their stress and keep their body and soul fit.

Recommendation

A comparative study can be conducted with larger sample of working and non-working women from different districts of Assam in respect to stress management practices.

Suggestion

It may be suggested that various institution should organize programmes for its employees to develop skills in stress reduction and management techniques among them.

References

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