



A Study On Occupational Stress and Challenges Faced by Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Women today have acquired skills and capabilities of not just being a homemaker but being at par with their male counterparts. This is the new generation of women, who wants to pursue their dream career. But this life is not a bed of roses for all. More conflict arises with the working mother. One has to fulfil the demand at work followed by various demands at home. In today's scenario the husband and wife both work towards creating a balance with their work life as well as at home with their children. But it is still difficult for women as she has to play multiple roles of a cook, a family maid, a tutor, a nurse as well as cater to the demands of office work. This can leave a working woman stressed and anxious; more so if the family is not supportive. The purpose of this analysis is the evaluation of women's exposure to stress inducing factors.

KEYWORDS : Working Women, Stress, Workplace, Working mothers, Causes and consequences

INTRODUCTION

Work related stress occurs when work demand does not match with the knowledge, skill and ability of the employees. Stress is particularly strong when the ability of a person to control the demand of work is threatened. Women face additional challenges in balancing their career and personal lives, which are not likely faced by men. These challenges may expose them to stress and health hazards. Women perform various responsibilities at home as well as outside home. They have to work in two different directions with different types of responsibilities that may lead to stress among them. Because of difficult situation caused by occupational stress, there are many mothers that would like nothing more than to give up work and spend their time raising their family as best they can. Difficulties with finances, Getting to spend time with the kids, Keeping on top of the housework, Dealing with sickness, Quality time for yourself, Personal illness and stress. Stress is the psychological and physiological reaction that takes place when one perceives an imbalance in the level of demand placed on the capacity to meet that demand on individuals.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the kind and level of stress faced by working women in the study area

- To identify the sources of stress of working women
- To identify the impact of stress of working women
- To identify the physical reactions faced by the working women due to high level of stress

Review of Literature

Holahan and Gilbert (1979) reported that women who assumed home roles (e.g. wife, mother and a home maker) and non home roles (e.g. employee) frequently experienced conflict between competing role demands. Conflicts were considered likely when women perceived their home and career roles as highly desirable but mutually exclusive. Guteket al (1981) found that the inter-role conflict is likely to increase as the demands of either the work role or family role increases. Frone M.R. Russell (1992) combination of career and family roles are often associated with conflict, overload and stress. Sophia J. Ali (2011) "investigated the challenges facing women in career development. She found that most of the women employees were dissatisfied with career development programmers and women were discriminated against in career development opportunities.

Reasons of occupational stress Workplace Adjustment

Adjusting to the workplace culture, whether in a new company or not, can be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture such as communication patterns of the boss as well as the co-workers, can be less of a life. Maladjustments

to workplace cultures may lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or even with superiors. In

many cases office politics or gossips can be major stress inducers

Discrimination at Workplace

However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. They are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all working women. A majority of working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues. This is usually the case in factories and labor-oriented industries.

Sexual harassment:

Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment

on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions and hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging modesty of women. Most of the women tend to be concentrated in the poor service jobs whereas men are in an immediate supervisory position, which gives them an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women.

Lack of Family Support

Lack of proper family support is another issue that working women suffers from. At times, the family doesn't support women to leave the household work and go to office. They also resist for women working till late in office which also hampers the performance of the women and this also affects their promotion

Insufficient Maternity Leaves

Insufficient maternity leave is another major issue that is faced by a working mother. This not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also detrimental to their personal lives.

Job insecurity

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganisations, which sometimes puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload extremely long work hours and intense pressures to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained

Mental harassment

It is an age old convention that women are less capable and ineffi-

cient in working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment. In addition to this, the same attitude governs injustice of unequal salaries for the same job. Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career

Other reasons

it include Personal demographics like age, level of education, marital status, number of children, personal income and number of jobs currently had where you work for pay and Work situation characteristics like job tenure, size of employing organization, hours worked per week

Consequences of Problems Faced by Women Physical Psychological & Behavioral Serious depression Inefficiency in work

Suicidal behavior
Domestic violence
Anxiety
Irritability
Low morale
Depression
Headaches
Stomach problems
Eating disorders
Sleep disturbances
Fatigue
Muscle aches & pains
High Blood Pressure
Heart disease
Alcohol & drug use
Feeling powerless

There are many things that you can do to cope with stress, reduce its effects and make yourself stress resistant. Here are a few of them.

1. Maintain a good sense of humor

Learn to laugh at yourself. Adults don't laugh enough. Children laugh 700 times a day on average, but adults laugh only 35 times. Laughter releases endorphins. These are natural painkillers and analgesics. If you can't find anything to laugh at, go out and rent a funny video.

2. Set realistic goals for yourself.

We are often our own worst enemies and set impossible goals and then castigate ourselves when we fail to reach them.

3. Get control of your time.

Our society suffers from "hurry up sickness". We drive ourselves crazy with schedules and the clock. Stop setting impossible deadlines and take a "who cares" attitude whenever and wherever you can. If you are late for a meeting you chair, relax. It won't start without you.

4. Learn some relaxation skills.

Yoga, massage, meditation, a hot bath or going to bed with a good book can work wonders.

5. Get enough sleep.

No one functions well when exhausted.

6. Inoculate yourself against events.

If you know that something stressful is about to happen, prepare for it. Anticipate what is likely to happen. Think about how you will likely feel and then plan to cope with these feelings.

7. Become more flexible.

This isn't a perfect world and things don't always turn out the way you want. Your job and our times may be because of stress, but it is your responsibility to deal with it and cope. There are lots of other things you can do, but this will get you started. The main thing is to understand what stress does to you, recognize when your body tells you that you are under too much stress and then decide what to do about it.

CONCLUSION

Work stress is a real challenge for a worker and their employing organization. As organization and working environment transform, employees face many stress problems. It is important that your workplace is continuously being monitored for stress problems. Further, not only is it important to identify stress problems and to deal with them, but to promote healthy work and reduce harmful aspects of work.