

**EFFECTIVENESS OF RELAXATION TECHNIQUE ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN SELECTED COMMUNITY AREAS OF JHANSI**

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ABSTRACT **Background:** In today's fast-paced society, working women often face the challenge of balancing professional responsibilities with household duties. This constant effort to maintain equilibrium between work and family can lead to high levels of occupational stress. **Objective:** To assess occupational stress among working women and evaluate the effectiveness of relaxation techniques. **Methods:** A quantitative study using a one-group pre-test–post-test quasi-experimental design was conducted to assess the effect of relaxation techniques on occupational stress among 30 ANM workers selected through convenient sampling. The tool consisted of two parts: (1) socio-demographic data and (2) a standardized occupational stress index. After the pretest evaluation, a demonstration was carried out, followed by a post-test evaluation of stress levels on the 7th day. **Results:** The findings of the research study revealed that in the pre-test 20% of the samples had moderate stress and 80% had severe stress while in post test 40% of the samples had moderate stress score while 60 % of the samples had severe stress. The mean score in the pre-test level was 165.07+ 9.35 and in post test it was 156.06 + 11.01. The calculated t value at df29 was 8.41 and the tabulated value 2.05 at $p < 0.05$, thus proving that the relaxation technique was highly effective in reducing the stress level. **Conclusion:** this is concluded that relaxation technique was effective in decreasing occupational stress of ANM and relaxation technique may also be effective in other sectors of working women.

KEYWORDS : Relaxation Technique, Occupational Stress, Effectiveness, Working Women.

INTRODUCTION

India being one of the fastest growing economies has led to the upliftment and scope for work and occupation equally for males and females. As we are rightly aware of that even in this increasing globalization the rule of Indian women at home and work has taken a multifaceted dimension. But this fast-growing world has brought its own level of occupational stress which correlates to burnout, work fatigue, compassion fatigue, quality of work life and neuroticism among nurses.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that stress is “a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation”¹. Stress is observed to be varying with various organisational variables such as structural, procedural and contextual factors. Stress is an ordinary phenomenon in modern-day existence. The tough challenges of globalisation, technological advancement, economic deregulation, increasing competition, relocation of personnel etc. are becoming the prevailing features of a stressful world.

Various research studies have revealed that in the health care profession medical and nursing students and professionals face and have experienced occupational stress at every step of work thus affecting their quality of life and work. According to WHO reports 50% employees in India including nurses fall under stress 30% have problems of marital discord 20% suffer from depression 49% of them suffer from upset stomach or nausea and 71% people under stress are not productive and cry regularly. 15% of working-age adults were estimated to have a mental disorder in 2019. Globally, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of US\$ 1 trillion per year in lost productivity.²

As per reports world-wide over 50% of employees lost their work across the world due to stress. It is estimated that job stress costs US employers more than 300 billion a year in absenteeism, turnover, diminished productivity and medical, legal and insurance costs.³

Study conducted by Saranya Chandrasekaran (2025) revealed that majority of the women (32.5%) experienced stress when performance evaluated by superiors and given negative feedback, by their employers.⁴

In contrast to men, women are more likely to experience physical symptoms of stress such as fatigue, headaches and depression⁵. Women are also more likely than men to cope with a job with unhealthy behaviours such as poor eating habits. According to Gilasi, Hamidreza (2025), the stress level of 87.71% of the nurses was at a severe level, while 12.30% of the nurses experienced a moderate level. The total stress score was higher among women than among men, and the difference was statistically significant.⁶

According to the British Safety Council, the survey revealed that nearly three quarters, or 72.2%, of female respondents reported high stress levels compared to 53.6% of male participants.⁷

Yousefi et al (2022),⁸ conducted a study which revealed that nurses are constantly exposed to high-risk behaviours due to their stressful job. To relieve the stress, policymakers and administrators of the organizations should plan to deal and also to help relieve these kinds of pressures. Therefore, identifying the stressful factors of the environment and implementing strategies to reduce these stresses are among the most important factors that can be effective in this regard.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To assess the occupational stress among working women.
- To find out the effectiveness of the relaxation techniques on occupational stress among working women.

With this in mind, study was carried out to help working women reduce occupational stress through basic relaxation techniques.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative research approach was adopted in the present research study. A quasi-experimental research design (One-group pretest-post-test design) was selected as the investigator intended to find out the effect of relaxation techniques on occupational stress among working women in selected communities. The sample of the study were 30 ANM workers selected using the non-probability convenient sampling technique. A total of 30 samples who fulfilled the inclusion criteria were selected for the study.

The tool for the research study was divided into two sections: part (1)- Socio-Demographic Variables to assess demographic data and general information while part (2)- was the standardized occupational stress index to assess occupational stress. In the study socio demographic variables included- Age, education Status Marital status, Type of family, Number of children, Age of children, Monthly family income, Duration of service, Distance of work Place, Mode of transport, Number of populations served.

Standardized Occupational Stress Index

The standardized occupational stress index⁹ contained 46 statements with a rating scale of 5 points ranging from 5 for absolutely true, 4 for almost true, 3 for partially true, 2 for almost false and 1 for absolutely false.

Before the data collection permission was taken from the concerned authorities. Samples were selected as per the inclusion criteria. Prior to

the data collection, the nature and purpose of the study was explained to the samples. Prior to the demonstration of relaxation techniques, pre-test levels of stress were assessed. Thereafter, the muscle relaxation techniques were demonstrated. And the post-test level of stress was assessed on the 7th day.

RESULT

During this research study, 30 samples had met with the inclusion criteria and were selected for the research study. Samples were demographically segregated under major heads like age, gender. According to Age, the majority 50% belonged to the age group 30-40 years. In terms of educational background, 46 % of the sample were graduates. 97 % of the samples were married. According to the type of family, 73.33% of the samples belonged to the nuclear family. In terms of the number of children, 50% samples had 2 children and 40% of the samples had children between 6-10 years of age. In terms of monthly family income, 50% of the samples had incomes less than Rs. 30,000. According to duration in work, 36.67% of the samples had 10-20 years of service in years. 76.67% of the samples had the distance of their work place less than 10 km while 10% samples had the distance above 20 km. In terms of mode of transport, 53.33% of the samples went to their work place via walking, bicycling, scooty, 30% of samples travelled via train and bus. In terms of the number of the population served by the ANM workers, 43.33% of the samples served above 9000 population.

Frequency and percentage distribution of pre-test and post-test level of occupational stress is clearly depicted through table no 1. which illustrates that in the pre-test analysis, 80% of the samples had severe stress level, 20% of the samples had moderate stress while in post-test analysis, 40% of the samples had moderate stress, 60% of the samples had severe stress

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Pre-test and Post-test Level of Occupational Stress. [N=30]

Level of occupational stress	Range	Pretest		Post test	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Mild	<115	0	0%	0	0%
Moderate	116-161	6	20%	12	40%
Severe	>161	24	80%	18	60%



Table 2 depicts that in the pre-test the calculated mean was 165.07 and standard deviation was 9.35. While in the post test- the mean was 156.06 and standard deviation was 11.07. The mean difference came out to be 8.47. Thus, the calculated t value at the degree of freedom 29 came out to be 8.41 and the tabulated t value was 2.05 at the level of $p < 0.05$ thus indicating that relaxation technique was highly effective in reducing the occupation stress level of the sample.

Table 2: Mean, SD and t-test Score of the Pre-test and Post-test Occupation Stress Score [N=30]

Test	Mean	SD	Mean difference	df	Calculated t value	Tabulated t. value
Pre-test	165.07	9.35	8.47	29	8.41	2.05
Post-test	156.06	11.01				

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of the study, the muscle relaxation techniques were highly effective in reducing the occupational stress in the samples.

In the present study, in the pre-test level, 20 % of the samples had moderate stress level and 80 % had severe stress level. While in the post test analysis it was revealed that 10% of the samples had mild stress, 50% of the samples had moderate stress while 40 % of the samples had severe stress in the post test assessment. The mean pre-test value was 165.07+ 9.35 in pre-test, while mean post-test value was

156.06 + 8.47 The mean difference came out to be 8.47.

The findings of the study are supported by a research study conducted by Sporthy Sagar, Ravish KS et. al (2017)¹⁰ which stated that among the samples 37.1% (52) of them had mild stress, 52.1% (73) were moderately stressed, 10.7% (15) were severely stressed while none of them were very severely stressed that needed immediate intervention. And not only this but factors like working hours, job satisfaction, clarity about work, amount of work exceeding stipulated time, loss of interest at work, not being rewarded and valued for their work were found to be associated with stress levels.

Another study conducted by Prof. Dr. Malliga¹¹ in the year 2023 on the effectiveness of relaxation techniques to reduce occupational stress. It revealed that 9 (18%) of the samples had moderate level of occupational stress among construction workers while 41 (82%) of the samples had severe stress. Post-test indicated mild 16 (32%) moderate 34 (68%) and none of them have severe stress after the post-test. Further, the mean score of occupational stress in the pre-test was 72.54± 18.345 and the mean score in the post-test was 34.88± 10.275 respectively. The calculated paired test value of $t = 15.26$ was greater than the tabulated value $p < 0.001$.

Effectiveness of Relaxation Techniques on the Occupational Stress

The current research study revealed that calculated t value was 8.41 at degree value 29 and level of probability 0.05 which revealed that null hypothesis was rejected and research hypothesis indicating the effectiveness of muscle relaxation technique on the occupational stress level of working women.

CONCLUSION

The growing advancement in technology has been a boon in respect to health, agriculture and finances. But on the other hand, the advancement has also acted as a bane bringing the adverse effects of stress on every area. Stress being a common feature in life needs to be controlled through various interventions else it can cater to the deep and destroy human life to core.

The health care industry catered to doctors, medical students, nurses, and other health care professionals making them stressed to the core. Occupational stress these days is less just about the physical trauma but more about the mental trauma and exhaustion.

In various research studies it has been clearly found that occupational stress is not just found in male workers but also persistently seen to be higher in women. It has become highly crucial to look for strategies in order to relieve stress.

With this objective in mind, the current research study was taken into consideration to assess occupational stress among working women and evaluate the effectiveness of relaxation techniques. The Relaxation technique was effective in decreasing occupational stress of ANM workers making it clear that relaxation techniques may also be effective in other sectors of working women.

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Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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