

Stress Management

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Abstract

This paper is a study about the paramount importance of managing stress among married women. The impact of stress is so obviously felt every day irrespective of one's profession. Globalization has made the world global a village. With the advent of technology, every one is challenged to face the complexities of life, conflicts in interpersonal relationships, difficulty to understand one's own behaviour, climate change, recession in the economy, cut throat competition, uncertainty in working place, sickness and ill health. All these augment stress. This study indicates the stress levels among the employed married women and unemployed married women. The reason is that since unemployed women live within the four walls, they are unduly worried about comments and criticism of others. The employed women on the other hand juggle with many responsibilities connected with family and career and therefore they hardly have time to listen to other's criticism or gossip. Therefore the authors suggest that the policymakers, corporate managers, academicians, and all the authorities who are in-charge of women to set up psychotherapeutic centers in large numbers, in order to help women, who play a key role in society. As every person, male or female, young or old is subject to stress, the topic is open to in-depth research and study.

Introduction

The word stress is derived from the Latin word 'Stringere'. It was popularly used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as force, pressure, strain or strong efforts (Khanka.S.S). The twentieth century has been called as Age of Anxiety and Century of Stress and in the twenty first century stress has become an every day experience and there is a need to manage or cope with stress. The word stress is synonymously used for anxiety, stress, burn out, and tension. It varies from person to person. Stress for 'A' may not be a stress for 'B'. Stress in the individual depends upon his family background, working environment and his/her interaction in the society.

Stress is inevitable and is part and parcel of every one's life. Good stress

management is about good problem solving. From childhood till death, every one experiences stress in their personal life, corporate life and social life. Globalization has made the world a village. So with the advent of technology, every one is challenged to face the complexities of life, conflicts in interpersonal relationships, difficulty to understand one's own behaviour, climate change, recession in the economy, cut throat competition, uncertainty in working place, sickness and ill health. This creates stress.

Women are the most powerful creation of the universe. They are endowed with immense potential to love, to care, to create, to grow, to sacrifice and to be a model for the family. Therefore they play many roles like being daughter, sister, wife, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, mother, mother-in-law etc... They

shoulder the entire responsibilities of the family besides other responsibilities. It can be seen that when there is problem in the family, those who are affected most are the women who take the brunt much more than their counter parts. This causes stress. Stress therefore should be managed and released through proper catharsis. Otherwise it leads to psychosomatic illnesses.

In the 21st century, managing stress is an art and becomes the need of the hour. Managing stress is all about taking charge: taking charge of one's own thoughts, emotions, schedule, environment, and the way one deals with problems. The final goal is a balanced life, with appropriate time for work, relationships, relaxation, and fun – besides the resilience to hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on. Hans Selye views stress as the spice of life and absence of stress is death. So in itself stress is not bad and can be used for cultivating personal skills and for nurturing emotional intelligence. (Khanka.S.S). But when it goes beyond the optimal level it creates numerous problems such as psychosomatic illnesses, psychological problems, and erratic and irrational behavioural symptoms. Therefore stress management is a key skill for success and happiness at work place and at home (Jeanie civil)

Review of literature

Edward A. Charlesworth et al (1982), Jeanie Civil (2003), Khanka .S.S (2005), Stephen .P.Robbins et al (2007) and Karan Raj (2008), emphasize the importance of stress management in all walks of life. They say that all types of illnesses both physical as well as mental

are due to stress related problems. Hence it is good that every one learns the art of stress management, other wise, it leads to health problems like hypertension, coronary disease, migraine headaches, ulcers, asthmatic conditions, chronic backache, arthritis, allergies, hyperthyroidism vertigo, multiple sclerosis, , eczema ,dermatitis etc.... . Stress can be over come by having healthy food, rest and relaxation, physical exercise, social support, yoga and meditation, hobbies, and healthy working climate.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is find out how the women are affected by stress in their personal, community and family life.

The following are the specific objectives of this study.

1. To find out, which category of women suffer from stress.
2. To find out the nature of stress among the sample respondents and
3. To analyse how the respondents handle the stressful situations and to offer suggestions.

Methodology

This study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary data was collected from fifty sample respondents selected by simple random sampling techniques. The sample respondents were classified as working women and non-working women who belonged to the age group from" between 25 to 50". Further samples were taken from the working women category like lecturers, school teachers, administrators, NGO's, other

professionals like bank employees, and hospital staff. The data was collected using pre tested interview schedule regarding nature of stress, and how they manage and cope up with stress in their day to day lives. Primary data was analyzed with the help of tools like chi-square test.

Secondary data was collected from journals, books, and websites

Hypothesis

1. There is no relationship between societal stress among employed and unemployed married women.
2. There is no relationship between the environmental stress among employed and unemployed married women
3. There is no relationship between family stress among employed and unemployed married women"

Discussions

Living as we are in a very complex world and conflicting elements, women being homemakers face more stressful situations. The success of the family life depends to a great extent on women who play vital roles both in the family and in the place of work. Therefore the researcher collected data from married women who belong to the age group from 25 to 50 and analysed their stress levels in relation to family, career, environment etc... The inferences are given below.

Nature of stress

The nature of stress varies from person to person. It was classified into three categories and the respondents were asked to prioritize the stress levels according to their experience. Then the researcher wanted to know whether there is any relationship between the stress among employed and unemployed respondents by using chi-square test. (X²)

Table-1 Social Stress

Social Stress	Employed	Un Employed	Total	Percentage
High	8	19	27	54
Low	17	6	23	46
Total	25	25	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated value: 9.74; Table Value : 3.841; Level of significance: 0.05;

Degree of freedom: 1

Hypothesis: "There is no relationship between societal stress among employed and unemployed married women"

The calculated value is more than the table value. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. The study shows that there is relationship between the societal stress among employed and unemployed

married women. The study indicates that the unemployed women are very sensitive to the opinions of other people and are easily affected by the comments and remarks of others, whereas employed women are too busy juggling with many balls and are even impervious to other people's criticism or even gossip. Hence their stress level is lower than women who stay at home.

Table-2
Environmental Stress

Environmental Stress	Employed	Un Employed	Total	Percentage
High	5	9	14	28
Low	20	16	36	72
Total	25	25	50	100

Source: Primary data

Calculated value: 1.58; Table Value : 3.841; Level of significance: 0.05
Degree of freedom: 1

Hypothesis: " There is no relationship between the environmental stress among employed and unemployed married women" The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. The study reveals that there is no relationship between the environmental stress among employed

and unemployed married women. The reason is that the environment affects both the sample respondents like water air and noise pollution. More over the women are aware of positive contribution which a healthy environment has .This goes a long way in reducing the stress levels.

Table-3
Family Stress

Family Stress	Employed	Un Employed	Total	Percentage
High	18	21	39	78
Low	7	4	11	22
Total	25	25	50	100

Source: Primary data

Calculated value: 1.04; Table Value : 3.841; Level of significance: 0.05
Degree of freedom: 1

Hypothesis: "There is no relationship between family stress among employed and unemployed married women".

The calculated value is less than the table value. Hence, the hypothesis is acceptable. The study signals that there is no relationship between family stress among employed and unemployed married women. The reason is that women play a greater role in the family and what ever affects the family affects them too.

Measures to reduce stress

Every one, irrespective of gender or career or marital status desire to live a happy and stress free life. They know that stress can cause severe health problems and, in extreme cases, even death. Therefore there are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress. Since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no "one size fits all" solution to manage it. The study revealed that the weightage given by the employed respondents are sharing /talking with their friends (I rank), meditation and prayer (II rank), listening to Music (III rank). The reason is that since they are connected to people, they are able to share their stress and find relaxation from stressful situations. Sharing widens one's own knowledge and understanding of oneself and others. While majority of the unemployed respondents release their stress by surfacing their pain by tears (I rank), by personal prayer and being connected with neighbours,/ friends(II rank) ,by nurturing reading habits etc..

Suggestions

- The government /NGO/Self-help groups can organize seminar

/work shop/ symposium to create awareness about stress management.

- The Mass media can enlighten the viewers by creative programmes which can go a long way to help people who are over stressed.
- Women could have some tie -up with the counseling centre and get the help of expertise to handle their own stress
- Women can learn the art of relaxing by reading good books, listening to music, taking short picnic, sharing with their friends etc.. through which she may be able release one's hurt feelings.
- The institution/organization/ home can create a peaceful ambience for the women so as to enhance their performance and make them realize that they are the powerful creation of God.

Conclusion

Stress is an every day experience. Women, being caretakers of the family are easily affected by stress, and their impact is seen in their behaviours. This study reveals that stress among housewives is more pronounced than the employed married women in the age group from 25-50. This is because unemployed women live their life confined to the four walls of the home and they are oversensitive about comments and criticism. The employed women on the other hand shoulder two responsibilities namely family and profession and so they hardly have time to pay attention to other people's criticism or to gossip mongers.

The study also signals that employed women have greater

opportunities and better outlets to manage stress effectively. The unemployed women seldom manage the stress due to lack of awareness about stress management. Therefore it is the duty of the policy makers to set up

psychotherapeutic centers in large numbers in order to help them as every person male or female, young or old is affected by stress. Hence the subject is open to in-depth research and study.

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