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REVIEW ARTICLE

Stress and Coping Strategies Among Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Stress is any situation in which universal demand arises in an individual to respond or to take action. Stress can affect a person's regular reality perception, problem-solving abilities, community spirit, interpersonal interactions, and more. Working women have a significant influence in the global growth of countries and must manage their careers while continuing to fulfil their conventional duties as wives, mothers, and earners. This indicates that duties are growing for working women and they are under a lot of stress.

Keywords-- Stress, employed women, stressors and coping

INTRODUCTION

Stress is defined as a situation that poses a risk to one's health or is beyond one's capacity for adjustment. Stress may come from inside a person or it might come from the outer world. It is a necessary and unavoidable component as a result of rising living standards and competency [1]. An individual's routine, physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being are all disrupted. Stress is a vital component of life and may have both good and bad effects [2].

In the present period, women are actively contributing to the social and economic development of the country [3]. Women now have more career options

because to expanding urbanisation and industrialization, and they are entering the workforce in greater numbers. According to the 2011 census, India's female literacy rate has climbed to 65.46 percent, and the country's growing urbanization has resulted in higher rates of female labour engagement in the rural and urban sectors, respectively, of 26.1% and 13.8%, respectively [4]. In contrast to their colleagues, who do not have to be homemakers, the number of working women is rising daily. Due to the challenges, they have in balancing job and home obligations, their multiple roles are stressing out their lives. According to a US poll, 60% of working women said that family issues are mostly brought on by work stress [5].

Since decades, women have been seen as being in charge of the bulk of home tasks including cooking, cleaning, raising children, caring for the elderly, etc., while men were primarily responsible for providing for their families. These firmly defined gender roles, however, had to evolve as more and more women entered the labour and pursued jobs [6]. Unfortunately, as a result of what transpired, women today have more responsibilities than ever before, and they must manage the conflicting demands of their job and home responsibilities [7]. Around 64% of all family labour is performed by employed women, and as compared to married males, their involvement was especially significant when it comes to work done inside (78%) and childcare (67%). It is important to note that Kashmiri women, who live in a patriarchal

culture, are also victims of this issue [8]. They have to balance conventional tasks with managing their careers. Thus, it is an additional responsibility for working women [9].

Stressors faced by employed women

Research shows that working women experience more guilt when they feel that they are not meeting role expectations in the familial life [10]. There are a number of problems that employed women are facing like:

- **Personal illness**

There is always a battle against time for an employed woman. It becomes evidently difficult for her to maintain a work-family harmony; resulting no time to think about herself. This leads to ignorance about her health and makes them to suffer from different lifestyle diseases like obesity, depression, infertility, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases etc.

- **Occupational stress:**

Occupational stress is caused by different conditions at workplace that negatively affect the overall wellbeing of a woman [11]. Like little control over work, role ambiguity and conflict with boss, poor relationships with coworkers and supervisors, heavy workload, job insecurity etc.

- **Household chores**

One of the stressors employed woman of Kashmiri patriarchal families find hardest is to come back home from work and do more work. It is worst to combat work stress and messy traffic to get home & knowing you have to cook, clean or deal with a pile of laundry without any helping hand [12].

- **Financial crisis**

Being unrecognized at work and overburdened at home, are not only hurdles women feel overwhelmed with. They face financial crisis too, as she is supposed to handover one half of salary to her family and another half, she is expecting to spent on

daily expenses of family members like; medicine, grocery, cloths etc.

- **Shortage of time**

Every one of us juggles the daily demands of personal and professional lives, but employed women in particular, feel pressured. They don't even get time, to relax, to workout, have enough sleep etc. In every society, women are recognized as primary caregivers of children (UNDP, 1995). It is the responsibility of a mother to nurture and take care of her children at early age. However due to hefty workload employed mothers are always short of time [13].

- **Unrealistic Family expectations**

For most of the woman life definitely changes after marriage. Not only they embrace that change but make an effort to accept this change happily. They try their level best to be accepted in a new home and stay well behaved at all times. However, stressors begin to emerge if they land up in a family where they are expected to stay perfect in every matter of the life.

- **Unsupportive family members**

Unsupportive family members are more likely to exert negative impact in the family, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the employed women.

Coping strategies

Some of the coping strategies employed women can exercise to deal with routine stressors of life are:

1. Stop being perfect as perfection is a myth, stay the way you are as a person. Stop being so hard to yourself, you can't keep everyone happy. Let people accept you the way you are, else you will end up being drained and exhausted.
2. Don't start fights, it is an irksome character. Stay calm, here to everyone and don't look for faults in others.
3. Be respectful all the times, stay polite and value people around you.

4. Learn to let go, letting go is quality of a strong person. So for your peace of mind let go the things, situations and people that provoke negativity.
5. Learn to adjust, never sacrifice; because once you sacrifice something for someone it will become routine. Try your best to adjust as it is temporary and will help you in adapting.
6. Seek approval from within and from your husband only. Respect others but seeking approval from everyone is miserable.
7. The first step to tackle stress at home is teamwork with family members. Good teamwork requires the concept of helping each other. It begins with everyone doing an equal share or some share of work.
8. Good communication is integral for a sound family health. By talking to people around you and inviting to their sense of civility, you can get their help in doing some home chores and lessen your workload and stress.
9. Practice Religious rituals and Meditation as it can produce a deep state of peace and serene in mind and can benefit both emotional and mental well-being.
10. Perform deep Breathing exercises, yoga, jogging and brisk walks.
11. Have some entertainment and fun, you will feel less overwhelmed by the stressors you face.
12. Have Balanced diet, as it helps to counter the impact of stress by fortifying the immune system.
13. You are important, care for your own body. A hot bath, sound body massage and other form of pampering re-energizes you and improve your emotional well-being.
14. A vital way to balance work and family stress is sound time Management.

CONCLUSION

Women who work full-time today experience a rising level of stress. A person

may have physical, psychological, and behavioral difficulties as a result of stress. Women who work show higher acute and chronic health issues as a result of this stress. It might be difficult to maintain stability in our lives and control stress. In order to overcome stress, one must first recognise how much it is affecting them and then use various coping mechanisms.

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