

Stress Among Working Women: A Literature Review

Vemuri Swathi¹, M. Sudhir Reddy²

¹Research Scholar, JNTU, Hyderabad.

²Project Manager, NTMIS, JNTU, Hyderabad.

Abstract

Women are playing a vital role in the economic and social development of the nations all over the world. Working women have a whole set of problems involving both family and professional lives. Women have to play their role as a wife, a mother and an earner. They have to manage their career while maintaining traditional roles. That means for working women it is two sets of overlapping responsibilities. Therefore, in addition to their traditional roles, professional roles seem to be one of the major sources of stress that working women have to face. This review of literature gives information about working women stress, factors in the working environment that cause stressful situations among working women.

Keywords: Work place stress, women, review of literature.

Introduction

As the number of employed women has increased over the past several decades, women are at par with their male counterparts. Unlike their counterparts they have to play the role of a homemaker also. The dual roles of the working women are leading to stress in their lives. Women are still considered responsible for the majority of household labor and management, child care and elder care and employed women work to the equivalent of two full time jobs. (DeMeis & Perkins 1996). This makes employed women experience strain on their time and energy. (Hughes & Galinsky, 1988; Kenney & Bhattacharee, 2000). Research has shown that the more juggling incidents per day, the better her chances for having low satisfaction at the end of the day. (Williams & Suls, 1991) and the chances for experiencing stress buffering effects increases. In addition, women who do not get their spouse support in household management are also experiences high level of stress. (Repetti et al, 1989).

Objectives

What is work stress

And the causes that create stress among working women.

Stress

Stress is the reactions of people which have excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. Work stress is explained as the adverse physical and mental reactions that appear when the job demands do not match

with the abilities, skills, and requirements of the employees. Stress generates mental or physical changes which are mostly harmful and sometimes the signs of psychological or physical defects are observed. Stress is described as a worst condition of emotions in terms of physiological rise when people experience a negative situation in such a way that they perceive a danger to their prosperity. Women, have a lot of balancing to do between home and workplace, and balancing between social and personal requirements. Moreover, the conflict of women will be all the more intense if her employer, as well as her family members held unreasonable expectations from her. Women's involvement in multiple role had a deleterious effect on their mental as well as their physical health. Due to this a woman is constantly under stress either at home or at workplace.

According to Reich and Nussbaum(1994) 60% in the United States of working women reported that job stress was their major problem.

Kristina and Stephen(2015) reported that working women are facing higher level of stress than compared to men. The stressors are multiple roles, discrimination and stereotyping.

Kristina(2008) investigated work-related stress in women and its association with self-perceived health and sick leave among working women. The findings reveal that the major factor causing stress among them is 'stress owing to hard to set limits', and followed by 'increased workload'. On the other hand women associated with 'high perceived stress owing to indistinct organization and conflicts' are reported taking more sick leaves.

Maryam Zarra-Nezhad et al.,(2010) stated that there exists positive relationship between levels of occupational stress and family difficulties in working women.

Iwasaki et al., (2004) has concluded that women experience greater levels of work-family stress as a result of societal expectations and thus bear the burden of greater levels of work-family stress than men.

Stephen Palmer and Kristina Gyllensten (2005) observed, multiple roles, lack of career progress, discrimination and stereotyping are the factors that create stress among the women. They confirmed that women reported higher levels of stress compared to men.

According to Babin & Boles (1998) role stress affected

female service providers, job performance more negatively than males. Women particularly feel stressed about trying to be a good organizational citizen, while at the same time, still fulfilling their responsibilities towards their spouse and family.

In another study done by Beena & Poduval (1992) observed that female executives showed greater stress than male executives. The difference in the stress experienced by female executives is due to a consequence of work-family conflict, social expectations, and behavioral norms that women face as they occupy a combination of roles.

O'driscoll, et al., (1992) concluded that interpersonal conflict, work overload, and role conflict contributed to the experience of emotional exhaustion. When focusing on families, results indicate that high emotional workloads in the family and at work were associated with increased psychological distress and goal loss.

Makowska (1995) studied psychosocial determinants of stress and wellbeing among working women. The significance of the work related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function.

Essien and Stephen (2014) observed that annual leave and getting assistance from colleagues as the most widely used organizational and personal stress coping strategies by female employees of commercial banks in Nigeria.

Dhanabakyam and Malarvizhi (2014) stated there is a positive relationship between stress and family difficulties in working women. The increase in work-family conflict leads to increase in work stress and vice versa in married working women. It is observed that women in professional job positions with high job demand were more prone to experience work family conflict and work stress.

According to Khetarpal & Kochar (2006), the key stressors which affected maximum number of women were poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment and under-participation.

Karve (2010) and Nair examined the different role stressors encountered by women executives and coping styles used by them. Results indicate that there is a significant correlation between Inter role distance, and Defensive mode of role stress. Employees tend to use more of a proactive style of Approach mode of coping with role stress wherein they deal with role stress through own efforts.

According to Sindu and Satyamoorthy (2014) the factors that create stress and coping strategies among women managers in India. According to them role conflict, role ambiguity and work family conflict create stress among women managers. They suggested the companies should follow the coping strategies such as stress management intervention programs, career planning and redesigning the job to reduce stress.

This statement is supported by Kodavatiganti & Bulusu

(2011). According to them women educators face comparatively higher level of stress than men counterparts. The stresses amongst the academicians are caused because of lengthy working hours, inadequate resources and classrooms that are over filled. The study concludes that moderate level of job stress and quality of life was found among majority of the respondents.

Tomba and Rapheileng (2013) concluded that female entrepreneurs feel more stress than male counterparts. Inability to spend enough time with families and friends, daycare and education for children are considered very stressful by both male and female entrepreneurs.

Dr. Hemanalini (2014) investigated the causes of stress that affect women in the working atmosphere in the textile industry. Majority of women stated that they are experiencing stress because of job insecurity and because of high targets.

Ansuman, Adithya and Madhulita (2014) determined that maximum number of women is suffering from poor mental health. According to them home and workplace atmosphere played a major role in deciding mental health status of women.

Additionally, this study is a comparison in the degree of occupational stress experienced by married and unmarried working women. The study reveals that married women are experiencing more stress than unmarried women, and the stress is explained in terms of traditional trends, demands of society and more roles and responsibilities assigned to them as a mother, wife and homemaker. (Nagina 2009)

According to a study conducted by Bakshi et al.,(2008) states that maximum percent of women are facing high level of occupational stress. They also stated that due to stress working women are not able to concentrate on their kitchen needs and their household affairs.

Abirami (2011) found balancing family and work effectively creates stress among women. According to him the factors that cause stress among working women are perception for stress under working conditions, low monetary benefits, and stress due to improper safety and security.

Rajasekhar and Sasikala (2013) concluded that employed women face stress due to family responsibilities, job insecurity, workplace culture and high demand of job performance. They also concluded that effective management of stress involves preparing role occupants to understand the nature of stress, directing stress for productive purposes, and making role occupants to understand their strength and equipping them to develop approach strategies for coping with stress.

Dhanabhakyam and Anitha (2011) observed that managing the daily home activities, looking after the family members and child care are identified as the sources of personal stress and developmental opportunity provided by the management, availability of transportation facility and

recognition of hard work are identified as the major sources of organizational stress among working women.

Deepthi and Janghel (2015) discussed coping strategy of stress in employed women and in non-employed women. They observed that employed women use self distraction technique (surprisingly effective technique for changing mood) more as coping strategy compared to non-employed women.

Balaji (2014) studied various factors which could lead to work family conflict and the stress undergone by women employees. He concluded that married women employees experience work family conflict due to the number of hours worked outside the home, flexible or in flexible working hours, size of the family and number of dependants of the family. These factors have an severe consequences for the psychological distress and well-being of married working women.

Sussanna (2012) identified high psychological demands; job strain and low job control are associated with increased stroke risk in working women.

Bhuvaneshwari (2013) revealed that stress in married working women is caused due to various family and official commitments, harassments at work place, working for long hours and improper work life balance. These factors lead to stress in working women such as prolonged headaches, hypertension and obesity. She also concluded that stress can be relieved from balancing work and family, from institutional support, by spending time with the family and performing physical exercises.

Stephen (2005) discovered work overload, uncooperative patients, criticism, negligent co-workers, lack of support from supervisors, and difficulties with physicians are the factors that cause stress among the nurses. They also suggested that interventions to reduce stress might improve interpersonal and motivational aspects of job performance.

Dr. A. Chandra, Balaji, Kishore (2015) studied the relationship between self-esteem and stress, the factors that create stress among gold collar employees in Chennai city and the effect of stress on the health of the employees. Their study revealed that most of the female married employees are experiencing high level of stress compared to men and unmarried employees. From the data it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between self esteem and stress.

Again this study is done by Ramanaiah and Subramanian (2008) on gold collar employees of Chennai city to know the level of stress they are experiencing. According to them the employees are under high level of stress and there exists a negative relationship between marital status and stress. They concluded that stress among female employees is due to role isolation, inter role distance and role overload.

According to Williams and Kurina (2002), women's increased work force participation, the rise in divorce and

single parenthood and the aging of the population are the three factors that create stress among women.

Balaji studied various factors which could lead to work life balance and stress undergone by women employees. He found that the number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of over time, an inflexible work schedule, unsupportive supervisor, and an inhospitable organizational culture are the factors that lead to stress among the women employees.

Muzhumathi and Rani (2012) observed that stress depends on work family conflict among women professionals.

Conclusion

Stress is a growing problem in the workplaces and a particular magnitude for working women. The problems due to high levels of stress can be exhibited physically, psychologically and behaviorally by an individual. The most serious effects of stress relate to performance. Women employees report more non fatal but long term and disabling health problems. The Review of literature described that working women generally involved simultaneously in many tasks, juggling between family and work responsibilities, which leads towards stress among them.

References

1. P.Abirami; Eighth AIMS International Conference on Management January 1-4th, 2011.
2. Ansuman Panigrahi, Adithya Prasad Padhy and Madhulita Panigrahi (2014), "Mental health status among married working women residing in Bhubaneshwar city: A psychological survey", *BioMed Research International*, 2014.
3. Babin, B. J. & Boles J, S. (1998). Employee Behavior in service environment: A model and test of potential differences between men and women. *Journal of Marketing*. April Vol. 62(2): 77-91.
4. 24. R.Balaji, "Work Life Balance of Women Employees", *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, Vol13, Issue 10, October 2014, ISSN 2319-8753.
5. Beena, C.; & Poduval, P.R. (1992). Gender differences in work stress of executives. *Psychological Studies*. July – Nov. Vol. 37(2-3) 109-113.
6. M.Bhuvaneshwari, "A Case Study on Psychological and Physical Stress Undergone by Married Working Women", *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, Vol 14, Issue 16, Nov 2013,pp 38-44, ISSN: 2319-7668.
7. Dr. Chandra Mohan A, K.D. Balaji, T. Kishore Kumar, "An empirical .India", *Abhinav : National Monthly Referred Journal of Research in Commerce and Management*, Vol 2, Issue 5, ISSN 2277-1166.
- 8 .Deepthi Dhurandher, Gaukaran Janghel, "Coping strategy of stress in employed women and non-employed

women”, International Journal of Scientific Research and Publications, Vol5 Issue 4, April 2015, ISSN 2250-3153.

9. DR.M. Dhanabhakyaam and J.Malarvizhi, “Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress among Married Working Women In Public and Private Sector Organizations.”, International Research Journal of Business and Management, vol no VII, issue 10, October 2014.

10. Dr. M. Dhanabhakyaam and V. Anitha, “ As study on stress management of working women in Coimbatore District”, International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, Vol 1, Issue 7, Nov 2011, ISSN 2231-5780

11. Eliot, 1994; Hall, 1972; Mederer, 1993; Wortman, Biernat & Lang, 1991.

12. Essien & Blessing Stephen, “ Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies among Female Employees Of Commercial Banks In Nigeria”, International Journal Of Scientific Research and Management, vol 2, issue 9, pp 1417-1430, 2014, ISSN 2321-3418.

13. Dr. Hemanalini, “Stress Management among women workers in Textile Industry-With reference to knitwear Industry in Tirupur”, Indian Journal Of Applied Research, Vol.4, issue 3, March 2014, ISSN 2249-555X.

14. Iwasaki, Y., MacKay, K. J., & Ristock, J. (2004). Gender-based analyses of stress among professional managers: An exploratory qualitative study. International Journal of Stress Management, 11, 56–79. doi:10.1037/1072-5245.11.1.56.

15. Karuna Kodavatiganti & Viswanadham Bulusu, Stress Indicators and its Impact on Educators, Vol.7(2): 88-96, SIES Journal of Management, March 2011.

16. S.K.Arve, S.Nair, “role stress and coping with role stress among Indian Women Executives”, International Journal of Arts and Science, 2010, 3(12), ISSN: 1944-6934.

17. Khetarpal, A. & Kochar, G. K.,(2006) Role Stress And Preventive Management. Internet Journal of World Health & Societal Politics; Vol. 3 (1)2-2.

18. Kristina Gyllensten & Stephen Palmer, “The role of gender in workplace stress: A critical literature review”, Health Education Journal, 64(3), 2005, 271-288.

19. Maryam Zarra-Nezhad, Ali Moazami-Goodarzi, Leila Hasannejad and Khadijeh Roushani 2010, “Occupational Stress and Family Difficulties of Working Women”, Current Research in Psychology 1 (2): 75-81, 2010 ISSN 1949-0178 © 2010 Science Publications.

20. Makowska Z, “Psychological Characteristics of Work and Family as Determinants of stress and well-being of women: A Preliminary study”, International Journal of Occupational Medicine Environmental Health, 1995, Vol 8, Issue 3, 215-222.

21. Mrs R. Muzhumathi & Prof. Dr. K. Jawahar Rani, “Examining the relationship between work family conflict and organizational role stress among women professionals in Chennai city”, International Journal of Scientific &

Engineering Research, vol3, Issue 10,ISSN 2229-5518.

22. O'driscoll, M. P, Ilgen, D. R. Hildreth, K. (1992) Time Devoted to Job and Off-Job Activities, Interrole Conflict, and Affective Experiences.

23. Dr. Rajasekhar and B. Sasikala, “An impact of stress management on employed women”, Language in India, ISSN 1930-2940 Vol 13, No 4, April 2013.

24. G.Ramaniah, Mu.Subrahmanian, “Stress among Gold Collar Employees in Chennai city”, Management and Labor Studies, Vol 33, No 4, November 2008.

25. Ms.Sindu Sivan, Dr.Satyamoorthy, “Management of Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance among women Managers in Indian Industries: A Contemporary issue”, Indian Journal of Applied Research, December 2014, Vol 4, issue 12.

26. Stephen Palmer and Kristina Gyllensten, “The role of gender in workplace stress: a critical literature review” Health Education Journal, Vol. 64, No. 3, 2005, pg.271-288.

27. Stephen J. Motowidlo, John S. Packard, Michael R. Manning; “Occupational Stress: Its causes and Consequences for Job Performance” Journal of Applied Psychology; 1986, Vol 71, No 4, 618-629.

28. Sussanna Toivanen 2012, “Social Determinants of Stroke as Related to Stress at Work among working Women: A Literature Review”, Stroke Research and Treatment, Hindwai Publishing Corporation, Vol 2012.

29. Kh.Tomba Singh, AS Rapheileng; A study of occupational stress on entrepreneurship in Manipur; www.selptrust.org Research Explorer;ISSN: 2250-1940;Vol2:Issue6;Jan-July2013.

30. Williams & Liane M. Kurina, “health.bsd.uchicago.edu/members/kurinaLia/kurina_socialstructure.