



PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS OF STRESS ON WORKING WOMEN: A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a coping mechanism for whatever we encounter as fear. Stress is the fight-or-flight response to fear and helps the individual determine how to respond to a stressful event or stimulus. There must be some tension to know your limits and capabilities. However, excess stress is distressing to people and can cause individuals to collapse. Stress comes from internal, external or a combination of both. External factors include family differences, professional and academic pressures, and money. Low self-esteem, negative mind-set, and rigidity are internal causes. It can develop into any of the following forms such as acute stress, transient acute stress, or chronic stress. Common factors include excessive sweating, lack of clarity of thought, self-confusion, anger, and anxiety. Recognizing and being alert to triggers and finding healthy alternatives are two important ways to avoid stress. Although there are some tests and investigations to diagnose the condition, a detailed discussion with a qualified professional leads to the most appropriate diagnosis. Treatment includes a combination of medication, counselling, and alternative therapies and lifestyle modifications.

INTRODUCTION

In today's modern era, the amount of stress is increasing in a big way. Stress is something everyone experiences. Few of the working women seem to manage stress well. Day by day, the number of women who have lost their happiness and health in life due to not being able to cope with the stress properly is increasing day by day. Many women find themselves paying the price with stress in the form of minor health complaints or sometimes serious ailments like heart disease due to over-stress. Stress affects family health. Hence, an unsatisfactory marital relationship leads to divorce. Institutions, offices, organizations where women work are not immune to the effects of stress. As a result, they face absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased sickness costs. Over the past several years, the effects of stress on health have attracted the attention of researchers. Many studies have shown that excessive stress is the root cause of many diseases such as heart disease, cancer, lung disease, blood pressure disease, diabetes, skin disorder, mental illness. First of all, in 1936, Hans Selye introduced the concept of stress in life sciences. In the seventeenth century the word stress was used to mean labour, burden, pressure, adversity. Further, the word stress was the concept of pressure, force, and in physiology a stimulus that produces deterioration in a person's health. The event or situation is dangerous. And it is impossible to deal with it. This kind of perception creates tension. Stress affects women as much as men. Housewives and working women are also less and less stressed. In addition to family responsibilities, the place of work and the situation put stress on the women working in specialty jobs.

SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Symptoms vary from person to person and depend on the type of stress and the level the person is at. Some symptoms are so basic that they are easy to ignore or create confusion for a different condition

Symptoms of stress are as follows

1. Emotional barriers such as anxiety and or fear
2. Stomach disorders including flatulence, constipation, irritable bowel disorders, heart and gas disorders
3. Musculoskeletal problems such as back pain, headache, and jaw pain
4. Muscle or ligament problems due to uterine tension
5. Symptoms of arousal include dizziness, profuse sweating, clammy limbs, breathing problems, increased blood pressure, headache, and sweaty palms.



6. Symptoms of short-term severe stress include: Aggressiveness Impatience Generally feelings of hostility and inner fear perpetual fear of everything Negativity and feelings of mistrust
7. High blood pressure, headaches, migraines and heart problems
8. Severe stress causes severe symptoms that include • Feeling constantly evaluated
9. Trying to look great all the time
10. Unawareness of the chronic stress experienced increases the risk of heart disease, heart attack and cancer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Measuring stress levels among working women under current conditions.
2. To explore the increase in stress of working women due to increasing influence of information technology.
3. To find out the increase in stress due to office work and conditions of working women.
4. To study the causes and effects of women's stress.
5. Suggest psychological measures to control stress.

DEFINITION OF STRESS

1. The mental, physical and emotional impact on the adjustment of a person is called stress.
2. Stress is the general or specific reaction of an individual to events that create imbalance in the individual.
3. Walter Shaffer: Stress is the state of arousal of the mind and body, which is the reaction of the body and mind to demands.
4. Fickman-Taylor: Stress is the response to events that threaten or cause actual impairment of a person's physical or mental functioning.

TYPES OF STRESS

Hans Selse (1974) explained four types of stress. Stress is a multifaceted concept Stress has not only adverse but also positive effects on an individual.

1. Unpleasant / adverse stress: When the effects of stress on the individual are harmful or distressing, it is called pleasant stress. E.g. Financial loss, job loss, physical loss etc.
2. Pleasant strain: When stress has favourable effects on the individual, it is called unhealthy stress. E.g. getting a job Getting married, getting promoted.
3. Extreme stress: Sometimes a particular event puts a huge strain on a person's adjustment skills. These events can also be favourable. This is called critical stress. e.g. appointed as a manager of a company. Although the position here is big, there are many responsibilities.
4. Insufficient stress: Sometimes lack of initiative leads to stress. That is, the stimulus is so weak that it falls short to produce a certain stress, it is called insufficient stress.

CAUSES OF STRESS

Any stressful event, situation i.e. Stressors just as one person's food can be another's poison. Similarly, what causes stress to one person may be trivial and of no consequence to another. So every person changes with the situation.

Causes of stress

1. Atmospheric
2. Organizational
3. Personal
4. External causes
5. Psychosocial causes
6. Subjecting personality

EFFECTS OF STRESS ON WORKING WOMEN

When stress is created, its side effects can be seen at the physical, mental, emotional and behavioural levels of women. Stress has an adverse effect on the life of working women. Disputes often arise with the head of the office in the field where women work. Also, due to non-cooperation from senior to sometimes junior colleagues, stress is created in women. Many psychological researchers and practitioners have found this in their research. Working women suffer from role conflict. They have high levels of anxiety, and it affects their marital life. The study also sheds light on the problems faced by women in terms of marital adjustment. Many factors affect women's marital adjustment. There is a significant amount of stress in women's attitude towards the job, spouse's personality traits,



economic and social conditions, attitude towards husband and wife roles and at various levels in the women's police department. Low number of police personnel, increasing crime rate, lack of facilities, long working hours, lack of holidays are also adding to the stress. Education, Medical Services The country has women to perform various family duties.

Nurses in medical care have to provide medical care round the clock during crisis. Nurses are subjected to physical stress due to night shift duties. Also, women working in the field of education have to do various educational works in the school. e.g. Student discipline, carrying out various educational activities, completion of syllabus, evaluation by examination and preparation of results etc. Work has to be done. Due to this, there is a kind of mental stress on the teachers as well. Women have to face various situation problems in the respective office, department while working. All those problems have to be solved with conscience, women have to be physically and mentally fit.

Physical labour is required in some fields. Layers In some fields, mental labor (intellect) is required. In each of these places they have to balance according to their strengths. Women are more emotional than men. So, naturally, there is mental stress on them.

There are some fields where women are required. E.g. Girls' Ashrams, Girls' Hostels, Girls' Colleges, Girls' Schools and Girls' Correctional Institutions are all places where only women have to be present because if any physical or mental problems arise, women can understand those problems and take remedial measures. Their mental comfort, guidance and counselling can do the best.

In this way, women working in any field are directly and indirectly subjected to physical and mental stress. But to control these stresses, women must do Pranayama, Meditation, Aasanas and physical exercises every morning.

STRESS CONTROL MEASURES / STRESS MANAGEMENT

Experiencing stress is a reality. Everyone should remember this well. Everyone should try to reduce the intensity of stress and make it bearable. The various efforts we make are called stress management. Stress management and stress control measures are as follows.

1. Women with good stress management understand that stress is expected. Also controls and regulates them.
2. They should practice relaxation techniques daily to balance the intense arousal caused by stress.
3. Signs, warning signs of physical and mental stress should be recognized quickly.
4. Adopting constructive rather than reactive ways of responding to traumatic stress.
5. Creating harmony between private life and public life.
6. Enjoy regular exercise, good dietary habits, adequate sleep, healthy happiness.
7. Increasing personal responsibility, integrity, empowerment, balance, awareness, action, experimentation, self-efficacy, continuous process, self-awareness by working women for effective stress management.
8. Doing yoga, different types of asanas, meditation regularly every morning.
9. Regular physical and mental health check-ups and tests should be done.
10. Medications are used for stress-related problems even if medications cannot be prescribed to treat stress directly. Medications are prescribed for insomnia, anxiety, depression and stomach ailments.
11. Counselling relieves stress considerably. Practicing harmony-based therapy and mindfulness-based stress relief, this helps direct energy and reduce stress.
12. Yoga, acupuncture, aromatherapy (smell-based treatments) and other methods of remediation are recognized options.
13. Recreational activities help reduce stress and promote a sense of well-being. Taking on confidence-building projects and making constructive contributions are great therapeutic tools.
14. Different management techniques help to make the attitude more positive.
15. In the long run, support groups can be seen as a great forum for de-stressing (through sharing of experiences) it increases self-esteem and helps the individual to realize that he is not imperfect and not alone.
16. Spending your free time in pursuit of your interests reduces stress a lot. Regular practice of relaxation techniques such as body relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, and visualization exercises can help a person calm down.
17. It is an important part of helping to keep the body and mind agile and positive and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
18. Setting achievable goals brings a sense of accomplishment and also reduces stress. In the beginning, outside help may be needed to set goals and set priorities, but over time people will be able to see their own potential more clearly and set goals themselves.

CONCLUSION

In every field, more or less women are working in the place where the environment is affecting the personality of women adversely and putting stress on them. Due to that stress, more and more problems like family, socio-economic, educational, cultural,



husband-wife relationship, mother-mother relationship etc. are increasing. Many problems arise in all types of relationships. Working women have to be strict and conscientious in their professional roles as they have to perform family roles competently. Due to these dual roles, the level of stress among working women is increasing day by day. Due to this, their family life, personal life, social life are adversely affected. But this stress can be controlled by regular physical exercise, yoga, various Asanas, pranayama, and meditation. Also balanced diet, positive thinking, courage etc. by adopting these things one can reduce physical and mental stress and gain control over it and achieve a stress free lifestyle.

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