

## An Ex-Post Facto Study on Assessing Stress Interventions among Married and Unmarried Working Women with Special reference to Coimbatore

**Janani. T. S**

Research Scholar, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore

**Abstract:** *Stress is a part of life, a normal response to emotional, intellectual, or physical demands. Positive stress motivates, and avoids danger and negative stress results in depression and psychological disorders. This research is to assess the level of stress among Women, and comparing their level of tolerance by considering marriage as a factor. The research design used in this study is Descriptive research design in other term as Ex-Post Facto research. This study done in KGISL Metropolis, Keeranatham, Coimbatore. The primary data collected through the structured questionnaire using Snowball Sampling Method, the data were collected from 70 samples, from different work categories. Quantitative analysis such as Factor analysis and Chi square are used to test the hypothesis proposed. It is found that, a large number of women workers complain of frequent headaches, back pain, circulatory disorders, fatigue, and emotional and mental disorders. Married women feel that the Problems faced by them are quite higher than unmarried Women. Role of marriage anyway results in negative impacts in the career progress and achievements of working women, due to some break after marriage for their family hood, care of family and dependent's.*

**Keyword:** Stress management, Women stress, Stress affects women's health, Symptoms of women stress, Managing women stress, Stress relieving methods, Stress care

### Introduction

Stress occurs when a person feels threatened, a chemical reaction occurs in their body that allows them to act in a way to prevent injury. It is the body's reaction towards destructive situations. It is called as "fight-or-flight," or the stress response. During stress response, heart begins to race, breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and blood pressure rises. Stress is the connection or interaction between body and mind. Stress is the physical dysfunction that is primarily caused by some form of emotional or mental response, may be mild depression, work-related pressure and even extreme personality traits that can produce extreme stress. Other risk factors comprise Poor or reduced ability to show or express emotions, Physical, sexual or emotional abuse history of sexual, Major childhood illness.

The potential complications of stress, specifically women, are at increased risk of:

Difficulty functioning effectively in everyday life, such as in home, at work, and in relationships.  
Disability, Lower quality of life, Major depression.

Suicidal thoughts or actions.

When it comes to a working woman they must treat their stress issues and lower their risks of complications by following the treatment plan of their healthcare professionals, designed specifically for them. This includes keeping their regular scheduled counseling's, check-ups and therapy appointments. But before that working women must realize that they are suffering from extreme stress that needs proper treatment.

### **Symptoms of Women stress**

Women stress include symptoms like chronic anxiety and depression, irrational behavior, a short temper, loss of appetite, binge eating, muscle pain, headaches, poor concentration, fatigue, disrupted sleep, skin problems and upset stomachs. It is important to manage these symptoms in order to avoid more serious health complications.

### **Stress Affects Women's Health and Body:**

Stress is the body's response to change. Stress affects women's health, by means of physical stress. It includes, such as extreme hot and cold, and emotional stresses, such as the loss of a job or loved one. Stress is not simply an emotional response, but a physiological one. When we send out a stress signal to the body, hormones are released, causing digestion to slow, blood sugar levels to rise and the heart to pump more blood to the muscles, thereby increasing alertness and energy. The accumulation of everyday stresses places a strain on the body and can ultimately lead to symptoms such as stomach problems, susceptibility to colds and infection and exacerbation of inflammatory conditions and autoimmune disorders.

Stress affects Women's body as , Stress can also cause backaches, insomnia, weight gain and weight loss, stomach cramping and bloating and the loss of sexual desire. A woman's hormone levels fluctuate during puberty, pregnancy, menopause and her monthly menstrual cycle. These hormonal changes leave women especially vulnerable to stress and its symptoms. Stress has been known to cause heavy menstrual bleeding and lack of bleeding, endometriosis and fertility problems in women.

### **Stress Affects Women's Health in Ten Ways as Follows:**

There are two major types of stress as acute and chronic stress. Acute is a temporary stress which might disappear in an hour, a day or a month. But chronic stress is the one which takes a long time to disappear, may be a year or more. These two types, take a greater toll on women's physical and mental health.

It reduces Sex Drive

It increases Irregular Periods

Very Hair Loss

Very Poor Digestion

Depression

Insomnia

Weight Gain or weight loss

Stress Decreases Fertility

Increased Risk of Heart Disease and stroke.

### **Need For the Study**

To revolutionize the "NO WIN" situation to "WIN WIN" situation. (These working women appear in a "no win" situation due to the heavier family demands than men, and heavier work demands than other women. This "no win" situation is the origin of the high burnout levels.)

To create awareness to working women about the problem of stress and to make them analyse and understand their own self to overcome their physical and mental difficulties.

To make women themselves as privileged as a working women and allow them to achieve higher and leadership roles in the Organizations, Family as well as in the Society.

To increase the Women's organizational promotions greater than those of men, who are more expected to be promoted to higher managerial levels.

To formulate the practice for overcoming the Physiological or Psychological problems due to increased pressure in both work and family that leads with less time for rest or sleep.

This study helps working women to overcome their stress problem and is most important to put up, working women feel more comfortable by providing a model for managing the interference of work stress, pressure, timing and behaviour into family and family scrapes into work vice versa.

### **Objectives**

To determine the major cause factor of intense stress and whether family or work that turn out be the primary cause.

To analyze the kind of stress (Acute or Chronic stress) is higher and which age group of women is highly affected.

To analyze whether stress generates high work life conflict which may affect the career progress of women.

To compare the level of tolerance of married and unmarried working women.

To test whether marriage is the root of stress among women and to study their struggles before and after marriage.

### **Review of literature**

Juliana D. Lilly, Jo Ann Duffy and MeghnaVirick (2006), studied, "A gender-sensitive study of McClelland's needs, stress, and turnover intent with work-family conflict". The purpose of this study is to study gender differences in the relationship between McClelland's needs, stress, and turnover intentions with work-family conflict. The Design used Survey data were collected from 383 individuals representing 15 different industries. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Results suggest that McClelland's needs act as an antecedent of work-family conflict, and that they have a differential impact on work-family conflict for women and men. Research limitations/implications here are the subjects were college graduates, hence it was a self-selected sample, and the results may not generalize to other populations.

Ellen R. Auster, Karen L. Ekstein (2005), studied, "Professional women's mid-career satisfaction: an empirical exploration of female engineers". The Purpose of the study is the dynamics of professional women's mid-career satisfaction are important to understand, given the vast knowledge, experience and skills typically accrued by mid-career that are often difficult to replace. The Research Design of this study empirically examines Aster's multilevel framework of factors affecting the mid-career satisfaction of professional women using a sample of 125 professional women engineers. Results of logistic regressions reveal that individual, career, job, stress and organizational factors all impact the mid-career satisfaction of professional women, but that stress and job factors are the most powerful determinants for this sample of women.

According to Sarah Moore et al. (2007), "Managerial women and the work-home interface: does age of child matter" ,the purpose of this paper is to explore whether empirical support exists for two commonly held beliefs about the work-home interface: women, and particularly managerial women, are prone to "super-mother" or "super-manage" in an effort to

balance both career and child-rearing, and these demands diminish markedly when children reach school age. The methodology used by this authors included as a survey mailed to their home, 1,103 managerial and non-managerial men and women completed measures of work-home and home-work conflict, work-related stress and strain, and reported their number of work, domestic, and leisure hours per week. The findings were ,Somewhat consistent with the popular beliefs, the authors found that managerial women reported working significantly more in the home; measures of conflict and strain, however, while showing some effect were not impacted to the degree that managerial women's combined number of work and home hours per week might suggest. The authors also found that measures of hours, conflict, and strain did not diminish abruptly when children entered school, due perhaps in part to manager's increased work hours and managerial women's renewed work emphasis when children entered school. Measures of hours, conflict, and strain did show some reduction for parents of teenaged children, although they were still significantly higher than those of nonparents.

Joanna Clare Gamble, Christina Maree Bavaand, Mark Wohlers (2010) studied , "Mood foods: working mothers' receptiveness to food with stress-relief properties". The purpose of this paper is to understand stress triggers frequently experienced by relatively affluent working mothers of young children, to explore the situational context surrounding the various coping strategies used and to assess the value of foods specifically targeted at affecting stress (i.e. "mood foods"). Women with young children were selected as the focus because the greater dependency of young children creates the potential for significant work-family conflicts. They adopted A two-staged study in their methodology. It explored the stressors that mothers with young children encounter and identified their means of coping. Four fruit-based products (atomizer, pill, chocolate, drink) were then presented and the mothers' receptivity to them assessed. Findings of their study includes, Some common coping strategies were viewed positively as behaviors the women wished to retain, but other strategies such as crying, yelling/shouting or drinking alcohol involved behaviors with which they were less happy. Time restraints limited the choice of coping strategy. Over three-quarters of the women in the study were interested in a fruit-based product with naturally occurring stress-relief properties that could either replace these behaviors or be used in tandem with acceptable behaviors, preference depending on the situation.

In 2013, the authors Edwina Pioand JawadSyed focused on "Our bodies, our minds, our men: working South Asian women". The Purpose of this paper is a guest editorial piece in the Special Issue of the Gender in Management journal on "Gender equality at work in South Asia". In this paper, the authors aim not only to introduce the papers selected for the Special Issue but also to offer an overview of the current state of female employment, economic activity and gender equality at work in countries in South Asia. The design or methodology adopted as, this paper offers a review of extant literature and macro-economic data on gender equality in employment and management in South Asia. The authors found four stories emerge in their research as, firstly the pervasive existence of structural and institutional barriers such as patriarchal ideologies reinforced by gender inegalitarian interpretations of holy texts; secondly women's limited access to education and skill development; thirdly lack of non-agricultural employment and economic resources resulting in economic dependence on men and sex-based division of labor; and fourthly the development and joy of agency where there is facilitation and nurturance of women.

## Hypothesis

**H1:** Work environment, working hours and timing is positively associated with stress.

**H2:** Different age group of women suffers from different kind of stress, they are inter-related.

**H3:** The intense stress affects the career growth of working women by generating high work life conflict.

**H4:** The stress is higher to married working women than unmarried women.

**H5:** The marriage does not have any impact on the stress problem of working women.

## Research methodology

This is a PILOT study, based on descriptive research design in term as Ex-post facto research. Required primary data collected through the structured questionnaire and interview schedules using suitable sample surveys. The sampling technique adopted is Snowball Sampling Method. This study covers the married and unmarried Working women in an area in Coimbatore.

This study done in an apartment consists of 400 houses, named KGISL METROPOLIS, Keeranatham, Saravanampatti, Coimbatore. In KGISL, there are many working women found in different categories. Hence, to carry over this PILOT study, the data was collected from 70 samples, from different work categories (10 samples from each work group) like Teachers & Lectures, Doctors & Nurses, BPO and IT professionals and staffs of a bank, who resides over Saravanampatti area. With the help of snowball sampling method, the data collected were from each of these groups. Quantitative analysis such as Factor analysis, 2 way anova and Chi square used to test the hypothesis proposed. The actual data collected in this pilot study will help to validate the reliability of this study, to develop it bigger in future research.

## Results and Discussions:

From the analysis, it is clearly found that stress arouses among Married and Unmarried women to a certain levels, which a imperative issue to resolve around. A large number of women workers complain of frequent headaches, back pain, circulatory disorders, fatigue, and emotional and mental disorders. These kind of bodily reaction comes under Physical stress/disorder. Basically about 70 percentages of women, under acute stress but the remaining 30 percent affected highly by chronic stress. Based on the result, as a majority of women suffering from acute stress is a solvable one. This is a temporary stress which can be easily resolved by means of providing proper counsellings and practices of meditation, yoga or as well they can commit themselves into some of games or art works, which acts as quick stress relievers.

Unknowingly both married and unmarried women undergo chronic stress equally, only because of their family issues. About 78 percent of Married women feel that the Problems faced by them are quite higher than unmarried Women. A huge number of married women workers complain of symptoms such as irritability, mood swings, and depression, sadness and concentration problems. These kind of reaction occurs, when mental stress arouses, it is known as mental or psychological disorder. This kind of Chronic stress cannot be resolved easily, hence, they must surely have a discussion with a psychiatrist.

Role of marriage anyway results in negative impacts in the career progress and achievements of working women, due to some break after marriage for their family hood, care of family dependants etc. Marriage actually affects career development of working women. It is proved that marriages plays a vital role and brings dramatic changes in the life and career

progress of Indian working women About 69percent of married women are working only in low and middle management and it is difficult for them to reach top positions after marriage. The working hours and timing creates big issues in family for married working women, but this is happening only in shift based jobs & companies. Married working women feel that their working and family conditions causes intense psychosomatic level of tension that affects them a lot than unmarried one. Women Career progress is highly affected because of their intense stress, family pressures and commitments. About 76percentage of respondents says that they suffer from work life conflict issues. To solve this career development problems, organizations must help them in order as providing some flexible timings and relaxation of stress reliving trainings.

It is proved that married women loses their Independence after their marriage, hence working women undergo late marriages in the society.About 83percent of Unmarried women experience extremely independent lifestyle than married one.37percent of Unmarried women face major problems of less safety and sexual harassments by their peers or team leads or some persons from society. Now-a-days, Due to financial need and lifestyle, about 86percent of married women get positive and better support from their counterpart. About 42percent of married working women experience very much comfortable to work even after marriage since they obtain extremely high level of support from family and their partner. Married women undergo secured working conditions when compared with that of unmarried working women. Some of the working women suggest that the targets increase stress in their job and it does not help them to increase their productivity as well as this pressure creates disturbances in their family too. They don't get proper motivation from both their family and from their team leaders to develop their career. Unmarried women, need to be careful by themselves, while they are trapped under sexual harassmental issues. They must get help from their family as well from their organizations, to face these issue.

### **Suggestions**

By this study, it is analyzed that majority of women suffers from physical stress and minority of women suffers from, mental/psychological stress. These two are inter-related, some people suffers from these two types, which is called as psychosomatic disorder. These issues can be easily solved when women adopts, some of the following stress relieving methods. Stress can be managed by eating a balanced diet that is low in fat and high in complex carbohydrates. Caffeine tends to aggravate stress, so it should be consumed in moderation. Exercise and relaxation are also important components to managing stress. Treat yourself to whatever helps you feel at ease, be it a yoga class, a 10-minute meditation or simply several deep breaths a day.

According to Research findings, "Stress levels can be controlled through effective relaxation techniques. In order to build physical and emotional resilience, women workers need to take charge of themselves as physically and emotionally. Such activities can be done by following these five tips.

- Take a break from the stressor
- Exercise
- Smile and laugh
- Get social support
- Meditate
- Reading books

Working women must do their own personal care activities in order to resolve acute and chronic stress problems. They can follow these steps:

Indulging in physical exercise/yoga/sports which aid good health and positivity of attitude. This can be done either at home or even at the hotel.

Allotting a relaxation time for them in daily schedule, and indulging in activities that can provide a sense of joy and happiness. It could be listening to music, reading a book or gardening. Such activities can make the married women worker a well oiled engine to meet the rough road ahead. Humour is said to be a great stress reliever. Sharing jokes, reading funny storybooks or watching comedy shows on television can be a good idea. Even watching cartoon channels with children at home can be an effective way to recharge them.

Follow an action plan. When one is better organized, one's efficiency increases. Making a daily schedule, making a list of activities and prioritizing them should be done on regular basis. Carrying personal problems to work and thinking about work at home is the worst thing to do. Spending quality and fruitful time at hotel and home both is strongly advised to married women workers.

Better time-management can be displayed by securing family support. Married women workers should make their children more responsible and should not hesitate to ask for spousal help in domestic chores.

Unmarried working women must avoid shift based timings. If it happens so, they should not commit for individual works. It is better to work along with groups.

To solve the problem of Work-life conflict, Sexual harassment, Women empowerment and Career progress, these steps can be followed by the Management and society:

The Management should provide proper method for promotion of married women even for top level positions.

The management must provide trainings for decision making, conflict resolution and group coherence.

Work life conflict problem can be effortlessly solved when working women becomes expert in managing their own time.

The Organizations can provide security to unmarried women in their jobs

The society should adopt severe punishments for sexual harassments.

The Management should avoid bias.

### **Outcomes of the Study**

This study gives a major view of various problems faced by married and unmarried working women. The outcome of this study will help the working women to overcome the problems and to manage their work and family efficiently. From another angle it will help the organizations to develop their policies, in order to elicit more effective work from both married and unmarried women. It helps the society to improve their own family and to encourage and support the working women in their career progress.

### **Conclusion**

Hence, by this PILOT study, different problems of working women like Physical and emotional stress, level of tolerance of stress, types of stress and level of work life conflict are identified.

Since this is a comparative study, it is found that stress level of married women is very high than that of their unmarried counterparts. After this research, some of the stress relieving techniques is suggested to solve women stress problems. If they adopt any of these type they can immediately get out of their stress. And also this PILOT study helps to create a Stress Management model, in future this would obviously help working women to balance life and work. This research will be again carried over in a big picture by considering 700 samples.

## References

- Juliana D. Lilly, Jo Ann Duffy, MeghnaVirick (2006) "A gender-sensitive study of McClelland's needs, stress, and turnover intent with work-family conflict", *Women In Management Review*, Vol. 21 Iss:8 (pp.662 – 680)
- Ellen R. Auster, Karen L. Ekstein (2005) "Professional women's mid-career satisfaction: an empirical exploration of female engineers", *Women In Management Review*, Vol. 20 Iss:1, (pp.4 – 23).
- Sarah Moore, Patricia Sikora, Leon Grunberg, Edward Greenberg(2007) "Managerial women and the work-home interface: does age of child matter?", *Women In Management Review*, Vol. 22 Iss:7, (pp.568 – 587).
- Joanna Clare Gamble, Christina MareeBava, Mark Wohlers(2010) "Mood foods: working mothers' receptiveness to food with stress-relief properties", *British Food Journal*, Vol. 112 Iss: 3, (pp.217 – 233).
- Edwina Pio, Jawad Syed (2013) "Our bodies, our minds, our men: working South Asian women", *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, Vol. 28 Iss: 3, (pp.140 – 150).
- Stress meaning, (n.d.), <http://www.webmd.com/heart/picture-of-the-heart>
- Stress symptoms, (n.d.) ,<http://life.gaiam.com/gaiam/p/Stress-Relief-Tips-from-Mayo-clinic.html>
- Psychosomatism, (n.d.), <http://www.psychosomaticmedicine.org/content/54/6/648.short>
- Relaxing techniques, (n.d.)<http://life.gaiam.com/gaiam/p/3-Simple-Relaxation-techniques.html>