A comparative study on stress management among employed and unemployed women

Shishira Srinivasa¹

Abstract
In a world that prioritizes capitalism, competition and globalization, every industry wants to thrive and succeed from its current position, to have the women across the world take up jobs as a daily wage laborer to some leading roles at workplace of various industries: women’s lives and the gender roles across the world seem to have gone through some certain changes across. But that does not really seem to change the amount of the stress women go through but rather at times, their jobs are a lot more stressful than men face. The research will study further how the role of women and the amount and type of stress they go through really doesn’t change from even when their working life from home making to being office CEOs, even if the factors are different.

Keywords
Working women, home making women, stress management, gender roles.

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management, BNMIT, India.
Article History: Received 01 December 2020; Accepted 05 February 2021

Contents

1 Introduction .................................................. 13
2 Working women and stress .............................. 14
  2.1 Organized sector ........................................ 14
  2.2 Unorganized Sector ..................................... 14
3 Research methodology ................................. 15
  3.1 The Objectives of the Study are ................. 15
  3.2 Method used ............................................ 15
  3.3 The statistical technique used for calculation was as follows .................................................. 15
4 Data, analysis and findings ............................. 15
5 Conclusion .................................................. 16
6 Limitations .................................................. 16
References .................................................. 16

1. Introduction
The psychology regarding women has had a history of hysteric tendencies, as forwarded by the eminent psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. This has itself shown the biased view that every field has held towards women. Today however several women have started dismantling the rigid conventions of patriarchy, hence diving the women into the working force and those who are homemakers. Though sharing the common thread of stigma and trauma encouraged by patriarchy, working women and unemployed women have different responses towards stress. The factors inducing such stress is also different.

Stress can be described as a state wherein there is a lack of equilibrium that is caused whenever there is a lack of congruence between the demands that occur within a person’s internal or external environment and their ability to cope with these demands (Kaur et al., 2015).

Pascal (1992) has given the definition of stress as a perception of such a situation in one’s environment which poses a threat to the fulfillment of one’s needs. It has been found that the state of the mind and emotions can affect physical health (Bovell, 2012).

Stress therefore can manifest itself into serious problems. It is as much a part of healthcare as any disorder or disease and must be given the deserved importance. The factors that cause stress are known as ‘stressors.’ It has been found that daily hustle can cause more stress than major changes or events in life because of the cumulative. They can lead to a higher blood pressure level, palpitation, anxiety among other things. Major changes in life such as marriage or divorce or even a change in the sleeping pattern of an individual can also lead to stress (Kalyani, 2014).

In women, both working and unemployed, the cause of stress can be boiled down to numerous factors. Some of them could be pregnancy, menopause and discord within family (Haynes & Feinleib, 1980).

However, one must remember that these are not what a woman is limited to, and have been often used to ‘gaslight’
or ‘mansplain’ the psychological conditions of women. As women are constantly shifting their traditionally perceived gender roles, so is the factors affecting their stress is shifting. Compared to men who are working, women have to work twice as hard. A study reveals that women who work outside home face an additional work of twenty-four hours per annum as compared to working men with children (Bruin & Cook, 1997).

### 2. Working women and stress

The idea to work regardless of one’s gender is a revolutionary concept for women, even if women have been employed before. Independence in women has never been appreciated and today, the working woman faces more stress as compared to a working man owing to the difficulties of gender roles, stifling societal conventions and family problems.

#### 2.1 Organized sector

1. The problem lies in the fact that most working women, in spite of enjoying a relative security at work, have to bear additional responsibilities of taking care of the household chores. The appropriate division of work in a family is hardly realized and most of the work falls to a woman.

2. had found in their studies that most women have an increased level of such problems as stress, anxiety and all the related disorders owing to their additional responsibilities that occur due to gender roles (Iwasaki et al., 2004).

3. In the year 2013, Rajasekhar and Sasikala researched about employed women in the organized sector. They came to the conclusion that most working women face stress due to such things as familial responsibilities, insecurity of job, the culture at the workplace and the high demand of job performance. They perceived from the research that there can be an effective management of stress. This includes preparing the concerned individuals to understand the nature of stress, directing stress for productive purposes, and making them understand their strengths. This would help them in developing such strategies as would enable them to cope with stress.

4. Societal expectations and roles they have assigned for women doesn’t help them in anyway even if they are working for longer hours, the fact that women have to wake up early to do the chores and help with children as well and make sure she is on time at her work makes it all the more difficult.

5. The constant conflict in the mind to balance the work, family and children amongst marries women and the constant need to prove their worth as a capable family member at home and a capable employee at the work haunts women and are one of the major contributors to stress

6. Another very important factor is also women fearing their safety and having to quit and deny certain great opportunities and scope of work because of the unsafe feeling, stereotyping and unsafe workspace for women across, is a stress buster for single as well as working women.

7. Job insecurity always stresses women only because there are number of factors that causes it even in an organized such as raising voice against some sort of harassment and other workers not agreeing to their ideas and opinions and creating hinderance in their work only for the reason being that they hold certain prejudice.

8. Women working in any sector faces various physical changes, such as monthly mensuration which has different effects on different women and these might sometimes demand women to take an extra leave which is not considered a very professional move in our society and is seen as an excuse and instead the incapability of women at work in places which stresses them to cope with these bodily changes and still be at work.

#### 2.2 Unorganized Sector

Most of these women working in unorganized sector come from a very uneducated and not so well to do family background which has not only conditional prejudices from others but they at times also themselves consider themselves inferior as a gender, and when at work are again stressed with the constant feeling of having to earn enough for the day and go back home for the chores. In the unorganized sector, the working women range from daily wage laborer’s such as those working in construction to maids as well as sex workers.

1. Daily wage laborers are more worried about their children and their wage, to meet their day’s food and shelter requirement. The women are more prone to abuses of different sorts and face more difficulties as most of their husbands are alcoholic, which gives them a lot of stress to be active, aware and working all the time.

2. A maid has same issue of facing abuses of different sorts and be mentally and physically aware to keep herself safe. The only source of income for her are the household she works in and hence it is important for her to have good relations and it is a major stress point if there is any kind of dispute because they fear loss of job in smallest of things and it is not secure, they are always at stress.

3. Sex worker have to ensure to keep their work private, if they have any children and at the same time also make sure their children do not indulge in the same work as do, they are a constant state of stress to ensure they are at better health and they have the society and its prejudices against them and the sex workers which makes it difficult and
stressful for them to provide safety to their children as well as them.

3. Research methodology

The research methodology involves establishing the objectives of the study, coming up with the hypotheses and analyze the statistics of the collected data. A sample of 100 women, consisting of both working and unemployed women was used for the purpose of the research [8]. The women belonged to Bangalore, in the state Karnataka, in India.

3.1 The Objectives of the Study are

1. The assessment of the stress level amongst working women.
2. The assessment of the stress level amongst unemployed women.
3. A comparison of the stress between working and unemployed women
4. The association of stress level of working women in accordance with the variables of the demographic.
5. The association of stress level of unemployed women in accordance with the variables of the demographic.

3.2 Method used

The tools used was Stress Scale by DrM.Singh (2002). The questionnaire was a self-reporting questionnaire with readily given responses as: ‘always’, ‘anytime’ and ‘not at all’. The relatability quotient of the same scale was approximated by the split half method and the correlation came out as 0.82 and 0.79 respectively. The validity coefficient was calculated with the help of Bist Battery of Scale (Abha Rani Bist) and the resulting correlation was 0.61.

A total of two marks was assigned to the response ‘always’, one for ‘anytime’ and zero for ‘not at all’. These were summed up and the summation of these marks were interpreted in terms of the state of stress.

3.3 The statistical technique used for calculation was as follows

Once the data was scored, these scores were converted into standard scores, using the 16.0 versions of SPSS. The mean and SD were calculated. The t analysis was used to calculate and analyze. This enabled to come up with the statistical difference between the stress levels of working and unemployed women.

4. Data, analysis and findings

1. Whatever be the status of marriage, the women who work lead significantly more stressful lives than unemployed women. By unemployed women, it is meant, that the woman is a homemaker and is not paid for her labors of household chores and domesticity. The working woman usually works out of the house.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of women who work outside their homes and those who are homemakers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Group N=100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* very highly significant at 0.001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of married women, both working as well as those that are homemakers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Group N=55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Very highly significant at 0.001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 Mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ value of the unmarried women: both working and unemployed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Group N=35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NS = not significantly

2. A married working woman is prone to more stress due to the added responsibilities of work and life balance. Several in-laws also add to the stress of married working women. Therefore, it can be seen that the stress in married working women is significantly higher than that of the married unemployed women.

3. There is no significant change between the stress levels of unmarried working women and unemployed women. It must be noted that regardless of their independence,
several unmarried working women are pressurized by their families to get married. The same is not expected of an unmarried working man. Here again the traditional gender roles and prejudices against one gender plays the part in propagating patriarchal values.

5. Conclusion

It can be safely concluded that all the three hypotheses hold true at the end of the research. The findings of the research bring to the forefront several disparities between the genders of male and female. It also highlights the traditional gender roles imposed on these two genders. It can be seen that for a woman, work and domestic life is supposed to be a responsibility whereas for a man a domestic life can often become a choice. The research also underscores the stress levels in working women. The more responsibilities a woman holds because of her gender role, the more is the stress level. For instance, in the study it could be seen that the married working women has the most stress. To alleviate the same, a lot of measures need to be taken by the family of the woman and the organization she works for. While several have the option of daycare, it is not yet an option that can be availed by most working women. The sample also provides a glimpse of the possible factors that could be increasing the stress level. In working women, it could include but is not limited to work place harassment, work place environment, familial responsibilities, and life choices such as pregnancy, infertility, marriage among others. In unemployed women it could be the management of household chores, the monthly finance and other familial responsibilities. It should be noticed that women are rarely supposed to live a life for themselves and that these responsibilities make up for their utility which should not be the case.

6. Limitations

The research was limited in the sense that it could not extend to the marginalized, unorganized employment sector for women, especially sex workers. Research regarding the lives of sex workers, maids and the other working women under the unorganized sector is sorely lacking due to lack of resources. The difference in stress levels can also change in accordance with the area concerned: for instance, if the area is rural or urban.

References

A comparative study on stress management among employed and unemployed women — 17/17


**********
ISSN(P):2319 – 3786
Malaya Journal of Matematik
ISSN(O):2321 – 5666
**********