

Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment: An Analytical Study of Working Women of Ludhiana City

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ABSTRACT In the scenario of ever rising number of urban married women entering formal workforce; increasing amount of work stress both at home and workplace and its impact on family and home environment, the present study entitled, 'Impact of occupational stress on home environment: an analytical study of working women of Ludhiana city' was undertaken with the objectives to know socio personal characteristics of selected categories of working women and their families; to examine working conditions of selected categories of working women and to analyse the impact of occupational stress on home environment as perceived by selected respondents. The study was conducted in Ludhiana city and a total sample of 150 respondents was selected from three categories of working women namely; doctors, university teachers and bank employees with 50 respondents in each category. Results showed impact of stress on house care and up keep as "pay full attention towards orderliness in home" scored maximum and "my dependency on servants has not changed" scored minimum. Impact of stress on social and leisure life revealed that "going out on holidays" scored maximum and "enjoy meeting social obligation" was least preferred. Impact of stress on miscellaneous work showed that maximum scoring statement was "pay attention towards bill payments, cheques, deposits etc. and least scoring statement was "keeping an eye over kitchen needs is easy for me".

INTRODUCTION

Stress spares none not even those who advise how to prevent it (Shah and Kanwar, 1999). PERC, a Hong Kong based consultancy firm had stated in 1997 that stress levels in Asia are at a rise. India too is no exception, a New Delhi based NGO reported that in 1996, 4100 persons contacted its helpline for people on the verge of committing suicide (Agrawal, 2001). Occupational stress is another major area of concern. It is stress taken away to home from work place. Occupational stress may have an impact on home and family environment.

Sulleret (1971) found out that working women were haunted by the feeling of guilt for not performing household activities in an organised way and poor performance of children in school which in turn created tension and prevented many women from feeling of fulfillment. Pruthi and Bhardwaj (1985) concluded that family environment leads to emergence of tension at job. The job stress increases with increase or decrease in family conflict. This also indicated that the pressure in job tension may aggravate conflict in the family which is a clear evidence of a kind of carry over effect from work to home and back. These findings points clearly to the

complexities which often arise in home due to stress of work having been brought home. Ludhiana which has now become industrial and professional hub for new generation has mounted pressure on its educated women to enter formal work force. City has two medical colleges, one university and number of banks and hospitals which has given employment to its fairer sex. It will be thus a worthwhile attempt to study the impact of job stress of these employments on home and family life of working women. Hence the present investigation was carried out with following specific objectives:

1. To know socio personal characteristics of selected categories of working women and their families.
2. To examine working conditions of selected categories of working women.
3. To analyze the impact of occupational stress on home environment as perceived by selected respondents.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in city of Ludhiana of Punjab state. A representative sample of 50 women respondents from three professional groups namely bank employees, doctors, and university teachers was selected

randomly. In all total 150 respondents were selected for the study. The interview schedule was used for collection of data. The interview schedule consisted of two parts. First part dealt with occupational stress for which "Occupational Stress Index" designed by Srivastav and Singh (1981) was administered to the selected sample. Second part dealt with impact of occupational stress level on home environment. Data for the study were collected through personal interview method. The data collected were tabulated and suitable statistical tools such as frequency, percentages, mean score, chi square, standard deviation, F-ratio, and critical differences were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Socio Personal Characteristics of Working Women and their Families

It can be seen in Table 1 that age of all the respondents varied from 21 to 60 years. A large number (42 per cent) of respondents were in the category of 31 to 40 years and about one-third (29.33 per cent) from 41-50 years of age. There were only about 15 per cent each in the age groups of 21-30 and 51-60 years. It was further observed that among bank employees 34 per cent were in age group of 31 to 40 years and 41 to 50 years each. Whereas in case of university

Table 1: Socio personal characteristics of the respondents

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Bank employees (n=50)</i>	<i>University teachers (n=50)</i>	<i>Doctors (n=50)</i>	<i>Total (n=150)</i>
<i>Age (years)</i>				
21-30	14(28.00)	3(6.00)	4(8.00)	21(14.00)
31-40	17(34.00)	22(44.00)	24(48.00)	63(42.00)
41-50	17(34.00)	10(20.00)	17(34.00)	44(29.33)
51-60	2(4.00)	15(30.00)	5(10.00)	22(14.66)
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married	40(80.00)	44(88.00)	48(96.00)	132(88)
Unmarried	10(20.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	10(6.66)
Widow	0(0.00)	3(6.00)	2(4.00)	5(3.33)
Single	0(0.00)	3(6.00)	0(0.00)	3(2.00)
<i>Education</i>				
Graduate	36(72.00)	0(0.00)	10(20.00)	46(30.66)
Post graduate	14(28.00)	12(24.00)	40(80.00)	66(44.00)
Doctorate	0(0.00)	38(76.00)	0(0.00)	38(25.33)
<i>Respondents Income (Rs./month)</i>				
Upto 10,000	44(88.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	44(29.33)
10,000-20,000	6(12.00)	8(16.00)	2(4.00)	16(10.66)
20,000-30,000	0(0.00)	42(84.00)	38(76.00)	80(53.33)
>30,000	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	10(20.00)	10(6.66)
<i>Family Type</i>				
Nuclear	40(80.00)	47(94.00)	42(84.00)	129(86.00)
Joint	10(20.00)	3(6.00)	8(16.00)	21(14.00)
<i>Family Size</i>				
Small (upto 4)	31(62.00)	42(84.00)	27(54.00)	100(66.66)
Medium (5-8)	12(24.00)	8(16.00)	20(40.00)	40(26.66)
Large (>8)	7(14.00)	0(0.00)	3(6.00)	10(6.66)
<i>Family Composition</i>				
Males	2.08	1.98	2.10	2.05
Females	2.42	1.58	2.38	2.13
<i>Family Size</i>				
Adults	2.98	2.60	3.36	2.98
Children	1.52	0.96	1.12	1.20
Children <14 yrs.	0.74	0.86	0.48	0.69
Children below > 14 yrs.	0.78	0.10	0.64	0.51
Average family size	4.50	3.56	4.48	4.18

teachers, maximum number (44 per cent) of respondents per cent were in age group of 31 to 40 years. In category of doctors 48 per cent were from age group of 31 to 40 years while only 8 per cent of doctors belonged to age group of 21 or 30 years. Maximum number i.e. 88 per cent of the respondents was married at the time of study whereas 6.66 per cent were unmarried. Only a small number i.e. 3 per cent and 2 per cent were widow and divorced respectively in the total sample. It is further observed that in the category of bank employees 80 per cent of the respondents were married whereas no respondent was single or widow. Among university teachers, 6 per cent each were widow or divorced and rest 88 per cent were married. In case of doctors 96 per cent of the respondents were married. The education of respondents as depicted in the table shows that all the respondents were having education at least up to graduation level. A maximum number (44 per cent) of the respondents were post graduates while 31 per cent and 25 per cent were having graduation and Ph.D degrees respectively. It is further observed from the table that among bank employees maximum number of respondents i.e. 72 per cent were graduates as against a maximum of 76 per cent university teachers holding Ph.D degree. In the category of doctors 80 per cent were MD while 20 per cent were educated up to MBBS.

Regarding the monthly income it may be observed that more than half i.e. 53.33 per cent of the respondents were having income between Rs. 20001-30000 per month. While 29.33 per cent of the respondents were having income upto Rs. 10000. Another 10.66 per cent of the respondents had income between Rs. 10000 - 20000. Whereas only 7 per cent had an income of more than Rs. 30000. It is further observed that only doctors were in the highest income group and bank employees in the lowest income category.

It is also observed from the Table 1 that 86 per cent of the families were nuclear and only 14 per cent of the families were of joint type.

Regarding family size, in the total sample two-third of respondents (66.66 per cent) was from small family and 6.66 per cent from large and rest (26.66 per cent) from medium families. More number (84 per cent) of university teachers were from small families as compared to their counter parts. There was no respondent in the category of university teachers who had large family. On the other hand, a large number (14 per cent) of bank employees had large families. There was not much difference regarding family composition in the different categories. The average family size of the total sample was 4.18 whereas university teachers had smaller families (3.56) as compared to doctors (4.48) and bank employees (4.50).

Extent of Occupational Stress Level in Selected Working Women

The Occupational Stress Index was used to measure various aspects of stress among the working category of women. Some important aspects included in the scale were; role over load, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group or political pressure, responsibility for person, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. The scale comprised of 46 statements which were stored on a five point scale. It is interesting to note from Table 2 that none of the respondent was found to be having low occupational stress. More than half i.e. 58 per cent of the respondents were having high occupational stress as against 42 per cent who were having medium stress. It may be further seen that a maximum of (72 per cent) doctors were having high stress followed by bank employees (62 per cent) and university teachers (40 per cent). Chi-square value shows that significance at 10 per cent level Surti (1982) in a study on role stress also observed that doctors experienced maximum stress in comparison to gazetted officers, researchers, and university and college teachers.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to extent of occupational stress

<i>Occupation stress index</i>	<i>Bank employees (n=50)</i>	<i>University teachers (n=50)</i>	<i>Doctors (n=50)</i>	<i>Total (n=150)</i>
Low	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
Middle	19(38.00)	30(60.00)	14(28.00)	63(42.00)
High	31(62.00)	20(40.00)	36(72.00)	87(58.00)
Total	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	150(100.0)

χ^2 value = 11.01***

Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment

Impact of Stress on House Care and Upkeep: Table 3 explains the house care and upkeep conditions of house due to impact of stress. As seen clearly from the table that higher mean scores are given to “paying full attention towards orderliness of home” and “keep house clutter free” i.e. 3.60 and 3.51. It clearly shows that in spite of stress, cleanliness and orderliness still remains on the top priority of the respondents. “My house keeping standards have remained same” received a mean score of 3.33 and “take full care of furnishings and furniture” obtained a mean score of 3.20. These scores show that the respondents were not in agreement with these aspects. Least scores were given to the statements; “take full interest in home decoration” and “my dependence on servants has not changed” and mean scores were 2.81 and 2.49 respectively. The scores show that respondents disagreed with the statement that the “dependence on servants has not changed”. The difference was significant for all the categories of working women for all the statements.

Impact of Stress on Social and Leisure Activities: Impact of stress on social and leisure activities of respondents can be clearly observed from Table 4. Highest score i.e. 3.10 was obtained by statement prefer to go out on holidays”.

“shopping is pleasure” was next to this with a mean score of 2.90. Mean score for the statement “keep hobbies alive” was 2.87. Mean score of 2.84 was given for statement “participate in social activities”. Lowest mean scores were bagged by statements i.e. “read magazines” and “enjoy social activities” being 2.75 and 2.63 respectively. In a study conducted by Sundaram (1984) it was found out that the domestic problem identified by working women were lack of time to care for children, guests and no leisure which led women to mental and physical strain. Thorough perusal of the table shows that the respondents were neutral in their response towards various statements which show that they were neither participating in social activities, nor were they reading magazines or keeping their hobbies alive. Similar results were observed in study by Desai and Oke (1969) which concluded that respondents had no leisure as they had to carry out all the household duties. Significant difference was observed for all statements except for “Prefer to go out on holidays” which showed non significant difference.

Impact of Stress on Miscellaneous Household Work: Table 5 shows the impact of stress on miscellaneous household work. Maximum score i.e. 3.03 was obtained by the statement “Able to pay attention towards bill payments, cheques, deposits etc.”, followed by “Taking care of pets and plants” (2.65). Mean score for getting broken equipments repaired on

Table 3: Impact of stress on house care and upkeep as perceived by respondents

	Bank employees (n=50)	University teachers (n=50)	Doctors (n=50)	Total (n=150)	F ratio	CD (5%)
Pay full attention towards orderliness in home	3.00±1.53	3.84±1.05	3.96±1.12	3.60±1.25	54.588	0.5723
Keep house clutter free	2.92±1.75	3.82±1.92	3.80±1.00	3.51±1.33	31.79	0.6117
My house keeping standard have remained same	2.64±1.65	3.98±0.35	3.38±1.67	3.32±1.00	74.78	0.5007
Take full care of furnishings and furniture	2.78±1.85	3.88±0.83	2.94±1.92	3.20±1.40	42.78	0.4819
Take full interest in home decoration	2.46±1.25	3.20±1.53	2.78±1.85	2.81±1.47	17.76	0.5213
Dependence on servants has not changed	2.20±1.47	3.06±1.70	2.22±1.05	2.49±1.22	35.85	0.6356

Table 4: Impact of stress on social and leisure life of respondents

	Bank employees (n=50)	University teachers (n=50)	Doctors (n=50)	Total (n=150)	F ratio	CD (5%)
Prefer to go out on holidays	3.02±2.00	3.08±1.80	3.20±1.63	3.10±1.85	0.77	NS
Shopping is a pleasure	3.28±1.75	2.52±1.70	2.90±1.90	2.90±1.77	14.14	0.3167
Keep my hobbies alive	2.36±1.65	3.34±1.65	2.92±1.75	2.87±1.70	26.75	0.3706
Read magazines	2.64±1.73	2.98±1.48	2.64±2.00	2.75±1.80	3.73	0.2809
Enjoy social activities	2.76±1.55	2.72±1.53	2.42±1.43	2.63±1.47	4.75	0.2711

Table 5: Impact of stress on miscellaneous work as perceived by respondents

Statements	Bank employees (n=50)	University teachers (n=50)	Doctors (n=50)	Total (n=150)	F ratio	CD (5%)
Pay attention towards bill payments, cheques, deposits etc.	3.20±1.93	3.80±1.13	2.28±1.35	3.09±1.52	8.03	0.5663
Take care of pets and plants	2.46±1.52	2.82±1.65	2.68±1.92	2.65±1.68	3.52	0.2621
Get broken equipments repaired in time	2.52±1.78	2.86±1.90	2.40±1.33	2.60±1.48	6.15	0.3276
Keeping an eye over kitchen needs is easy	2.66±1.72	2.82±2.00	2.24±1.65	2.57±1.77	8.71	0.3147

time' was 2.60 and the least score was obtained for "Keeping an eye on kitchen needs is easier" i.e. 2.57. Due to lack of time all respondents faced problems in performing various miscellaneous household jobs.

CONCLUSIONS

It can thus be concluded from the study that majority of women were in the age groups of 31 to 40 years; married and were post graduates. Their monthly income was in the range of Rs. 20,000 to 30,000 per month. Most of them belonged to nuclear family and had family size of upto 4 members. 58 per cent of the respondents were having high occupational stress, followed by 42 per cent in middle stress category and none was found to have low amount of stress level. Impact of stress on house care and up keep was evident as results showed that they pay full attention towards orderliness in home despite moderate work stress which added to their overall stress and fatigue. Impact of stress on social and leisure life of respondents was also indicative of the fact that they prefer going out on holidays to

relieve work stress. Impact of stress on miscellaneous work showed that they could not keep an eye over kitchen needs and household affairs due to their occupational work stress.

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