

## A Study of Occupational Stress and Mental Health of Working Women



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### ABSTRACT

The main aim of the present study was to analyzed and find out the relationship between occupational stress and mental health among working women. Four hundred fifty working women as a teacher, nurse and clerk participated in study. Standardized Occupational Stress Index by Shrivastav and Mental Health Inventory by Jagdish were used for data collection. To analyze the data 't' test and (product moment) correlation technique were used. Results indicate that high occupational stress was found among nurses in comparison to clerks and teachers. Significant correlation found between occupation stress and mental health among working women.

### INTRODUCTION:

The Indian women were treated as an appendage of men a distinct and meekly accepted conception of her family duties and obligations. She had not even the haziest awareness of her rights in the early years of British rule in India. The decline in India women's status was reflected

in the customs relating to marriage, religion and property, widowhood, dowry, role in the family, basic attitudes with respect to the social image of women etc.

The various Hindu revivalist organizations, such as the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj gave a great impetus to the awakening of womanhood. Educated women came forward, demanding equal right with men. Ramabai Rande, Pandit Ramabai, Saraladevi, Chanda Rani, Sreemati Saroj Nalini and lots of the others are known for their valuable service for uplifting the position of women during this period.

After 1800 AD, various socio-cultural and politico economic circumstances, protest movements, social reformers, reform movements and freedom movement and call of Gandhiji during the freedom struggle in 1920's brought about great change in the position of women through educator, socio-economic and legislative measures.

The Indian Reforms Act 1921 enfranchised a small section of Indian population for the first time and women were also included in this. Wifehood was made a qualification for voting and some seats were especially reserved for women. After the First World War, Mahatma Gandhi set the pace for the progress of Indian women in all spheres of life. He advised women to emancipate themselves from drudgery of the kitchen. Adhering to Gandhi's appeal, women came out in thousands and took part in the National movement.

After independence, the status of Indian women got a real shot in the arm as the constitution makers considered it a major target to be achieved in creating a new India.

In cities and village, women today are breaking the social and psychological barriers and are assuming new responsibilities.

Circumstantial changes, increased opportunities, access to higher education and need to reinforce family budgets vis-a-vis the ever spiraling inflations have brought women from middle and upper-middle classes into the working force of this country. These women have started seeking

employment in addition to their domestic roles unabated and now increasing number of women are entering the job market.

Although, their being in employment has been accepted by the society because of the realities of economic strain and because the income earned by the women becomes essential for the family's standard of living and quality of life. Our distorted social customs advocate the concept that feminine qualities best blossom in the confinement of the house, something which the men folk of our society still longingly and ardently believe, so much so, that even all the developments and advancements of the present age have not been able to clear the cobwebs of their misconceptions. So, it is only natural that the sight of the showpiece of the house moving out of her shelf raise many brows from the guardians of our culture and custom. In fact, this is a stepping stone beyond which lie the actually intriguing and appalling problems for women, who have decided to venture into the male world of office and work.

Family responsibilities are still considered to be her primary responsibilities where sharing in domestic chores is rare, in our society women is considered the maker and the defender of the entire household. An Indian woman is first a 'Grihalakshmi', then anything else in her life. Every conceivable thing on the home front-from bearing and rearing children to cooking, washing, cleaning, and marketing-all comes under the duty schedule of women. Daughters in our society are groomed to become efficient home manager and this upbringing and mental make-up comes under severe strain, once a woman has to manage both her office and home. They after their working shift come back to home, and are compelled to start their second shift of drudgery with renewed vigor.

Wharton & Erickson (1995) investigated that performance of family emotion work had negative consequences for women's job-related well being.

Makovaska (1995) conclude that family greater demands on women take a higher hold on women's mental health in the dual career as compared to males.

Rivera et. al. (1997) explored the relative effects of employment and family responsibility on the perceived health status of women. The results suggest that there is a need for a development of public policies that seek to increase labor force participation rate since any expansion has the potential to have a positive impact of heir health status.

Sahu and Mistra (1995) concluded that working women teachers feel more stress because of their dual responsibilities and more concerned with family as expected from females.

Saxena (1996) indicated that non-working women experience greater life satisfaction than working women and happiness was greater among non-working women that working women.

Working women and their problems are the new fields of the research. During the past few decades the importance of women's role in society has significantly changed. The problem of occupational stress and mental health in working women is an important aspect of social change in India. Barnett, et al., (1995); Rice, (1987) denote that working women still face a number of blatant discriminatory practices that add stress to their working conditions. They considered as facing more occupational stress than their male counter parts. Cooper and Lewis (1998) Cartwright & Cooper (1994) studies revealed that work stress has adverse consequences on employees and organization too.

The consequent outcome is that modern working women live in to systems and need to perform both familial as well as occupational roles. This is turn leads a number of role stresses among working women. Perhaps there are several reasons for stress which women experience at occupational or job. In any social/ business organization, occupational stress/job stress and personality factor determine the mental health of an employee. Srivastava and Jagdish (1989)reported that employee's perceived occupational stress was negatively correlated with job satisfaction and mental health.

Sabir et al., (2003) Indicate that nearly a third of the working population in developed countries report high to very high levels of stress. Similarly, evidence for newly industrialized countries is

also indicative of the prevalence of stress. Time pressures, excessive demands, role conflicts, ergonomic deficiencies, job security and relationship with customers are particularly common stressors amongst employees in the financial services sector. Furthermore, new stressors such as computer breakdowns, computer slowdowns and electronic performance monitoring, have developed as a result of increased human interaction with computers.

Nadeem Malik (2011) study describes the occupational stress in public and private banks. A randomly selected sample of 200 employees from private and public banks shows that occupational stress is found higher among private bank employees compared to public bank employees. Among different occupational stress variables role over load, role authority, role conflict and lack of senior level support contribute more to occupational stress. Bank employees cannot afford the time to relax and “wind down” when they are faced with work variety, discrimination, favoritism, delegation and conflicting tasks.

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:**

To study and compare the relationship between Occupational Stress and Mental Health among Working Women as Nurses, Clerks and Teachers.

## **HYPOTHESIS:**

1. There will be no significant difference with regards to Occupational Stress among working women as nurses, clerks and teachers.
2. There will be no significant difference in mental health among working women as nurses, clerks and teachers.
3. There will be no significant correlation between occupational stress and mental of working women as nurses, clerks and teachers.

## **METHOD**

## **SAMPLE:**

The sample was consisted of 450 married working from North Gujarat India. 150 married working women have been selected from each occupation. viz.. teachers, nursing and clerks. The age range from 25 to 35 years.

## **TOOLS:**

Occupational stress index by Shriwastav and Mental Health Inventory was used for data collection.

## **PROCEDURE:**

Occupational Stress Index and Mental Health Inventory was administered individually by interview method. The required instructions were given. All the precautions were taken during the test administration as per manual. Scoring of each test was done as per manual of the test. To analyzed the data 't' test and correlation technique (product moment) were used.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS:**

**Table -1**

**Showing Mean, SD and t ratio on occupational stress of various group of working women**

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Level of significant
Nurses	150	133.82	24.08	1.7	Ns
Clerk	150	128.71	25.2		
Nurses	150	133.82	24.08	5.39	0.01
Teachers	150	119.92	20.54		
Clerks	150	128.71	25.2	3.31	.05
Teachers	150	119.92	20.54		

The results on occupational stress of three comparative group of working women, in first group nurses ( $M=133.82, SD=24.08$ ) and clerk ( $M=128.71, SD=25.22$ ). 't' value 1.79 is not significant. It means significant difference do not existed between nurses and clerks on occupational stress.

Significant difference on occupation stress is found between nurses ( $M=133.82, SD=24.08$ ) and teachers ( $M=119.92, SD=20.54$ ) in the second group. Which shows that nurses are experiencing more occupational stress than the teachers. The 't' value 5.39. It is significant at .01 level. Then the second highest occupational stress is between clerk ( $M=128.71, SD=25.22$ ) and teachers ( $M=119.92, SD=20.54$ ). Women working as clerk experiencing more occupational stress than teachers. The 't' value 3.31. It is significant at .05 level.

Nurses have greater occupational stress in comparison to clerk and teacher respectively. Teacher perceive minimum occupational stress because their working climate is the best in comparison to other two groups. They have greater opportunities to developing and maintaining relations at work place. On other hand, nurses work under the most severe occupation environment in comparison to clerks and teachers. Nurses are always close to injuries and death. Rastogi & Kashyap (2001) also revealed that maximum occupational stress was found among nurses in comparison to clerks and teachers.

**Table-2**

**Showing Mean, SD and t ratio on mental health score of various group of working women**

	N	Mean	SD	t	Level of significant
Nurses	150	156.54	18.40	2.57	.05
Clerk	150	161.98	15.52		
Nurses	150	156.54	18.40	3.26	.05
Teachers	150	163.90	20.59		
Clerk	150	161.98	15.52	0.91	Ns
Teachers	150	163.90	20.59		



The results on mental health among the three comparative group shows that the difference of mental health is found between clerks ( $M=161.98, SD=15.52$ ) is greater than nurses ( $M=156.54, SD=18.40$ ). It means nurses have poor mental health in comparison to clerk. The 't' value 2.57 is found significant at .05 level. The difference of mental health is found between teachers ( $M=163.90, SD=20.59$ ) is greater than nurses ( $M=156.54, SD=18.40$ ). It indicates that nurses have poor mental health in comparison to teachers. The 't' value 3.26 is found significant at .01 level. The difference of mental health is not found between clerks ( $M=161.98, SD=15.52$ ) and teachers ( $M=163.90, SD=20.59$ ). The 't' value 0.91 is not significant. Nurses have poor mental health in comparison to other to groups. Mostly nurses, in our society come from very poor family background. They are satisfied with the economic gains which help them in satisfying the problem of bread and butter though they know in advance that their job is going to be tough, yet they feel problems in their job and consequently their mental health has been found adversely affected due to severe stresses. Harsh attitude and night duty are also responsible for their poor mental health. O'Neil and others (1985) found that stress in the work environment has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of working women.

The results of correlation found significant negative .01 level between overall occupational stress and mental health in nurses,  $r=-0.403$ , in clerks  $r=-0.327$ , in teachers  $r=-0.506$ . The correlation between various occupation depending upon the nature of work. It has been found that occupational stress is negatively related with mental health in working women. Which is the highest in teachers with compare to nurse and clerk. Teachers are generally more qualified than other two groups. They are also having high expectation from the organization. School teachers hardly get any opportunities to use their qualification as well as the policy and decision making. This might create the feeling of helplessness. Several other studies have also reported similar findings. Srivastave and Jagdish (1989) reported that employee's perceived occupational stress was negatively correlated with job satisfaction and mental health. Rastogi & Kashyap (2001) found significant negative relationship between occupational stress and mental health was found among working women employed in different professions.



## **CONCLUSIONS:**

High occupational stress was found among nurses in comparison to clerks and teachers. Significant correlation found between occupational stress and mental health among working women.

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