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Stress Management: A Study on Female Teaching Fraternity

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Abstract:

In this paper our main objective is to find out the reasons for stress in working women. Also we would like to drive home the thought that a little amount of positive stress is healthy. We are basing our analysis on both primary and secondary data. Our attempt in this direction is mainly focused on whether the stress is related to job, family or health disorders. All of us experience stress and feel fatigued sometime in our lives. It can be because of work pressure, improper diet and cornered situations and at times inability to take proper and timely decisions. Stress is not the same as ill-health, but has been related to such illnesses as cardiovascular disease, Immune system disease, Asthma, Diabetes, Digestive disorders, Ulcers, Skin complaints - psoriasis, Headaches, migraines, Pre-menstrual syndrome and depression.

1. Introduction

Let us understand one interesting reality. When there are so many living beings on this earth, why a human being alone needs counseling? When there are so many living beings, why only human beings feels stressed out? Frankly, all living beings feel stress. It is only human beings who should balance their stress levels to perform reasonably in the society. There is lot of difference between all other living beings when compared with humans.

It's really an annoying reality! When all the other living beings start walking within few seconds after birth, man alone needs to be protected for quite some time. Slowly, he learns to live on this earth. This is the major difference between animals and human beings. That is why animals live in forests and human beings need a society to live their life. He needs care, protection, love and various feelings to exist on this earth. If these are missing in life, he starts feeling insecure. At this stage even a very great Emperor or a king also loses directional thinking.

Our focus is on Female teaching fraternity. We took this topic to get closer to our profession and realize our strengths and also opportunities. Generally women feel stressed trying to balance home life and work life. Women works either to meet her financial requirements or to attain a social status. Sometime both can be the reasons for her to be working women. She also chooses to work to create her identity at home and also in the society.

2. Factors Which Cause Stress

Stress levels are different for different women. One women's recreation may be another women's stressor.

General Factors of stress include-

1. Unhappiness and dissatisfaction in life.
2. Work load
3. Pollution due to chalk dust and large strength.
4. Life style disorders
5. Being unhappy in her job

6. Having a heavy workload or too much responsibility
7. Working for long hours
8. Having poor management at work place, unclear expectations of her work, or no say in the decision-making process
9. Working under uncertain conditions
10. Being insecure about her chance for advancement or risk of termination
11. Having to give speeches in front of colleagues or large groups
12. Facing discrimination or harassment at work place.
13. Unable to help the poor and needy students due to various reasons
14. Feeling of not able to do justice to her profession
15. The death of a loved one
16. Divorce
17. Loss of job
18. Increase in financial obligations
19. Getting married
20. Family problems
21. Job expectations and peer pressure
22. Moving to a new home
23. Chronic illness or injury
24. Emotional problems (depression , anxiety, anger, grief, guilt ,low self esteem)
25. Taking care of an elderly or sick family member

Research shows that among the people aged between 25 and 44, one third felt that work itself is their biggest stress. School/college/university where they are working is a cause of stress for a quarter (25%) of people between 16 and 24s of years of age. Jobs stress out men twice as much as women (30% vs. 14%). Family stresses out women three times as much as men (29% vs. 9%)

Situations which cause a stress reaction are called stress triggers or stressors. These Stress stressors can be categorized into –

- Physical stressors
- Mental stressors
- Emotional stressors

Physical Stressors: Physical stress factors include all those things which cause stress on the body, e.g. - chronic pain, illness, including allergies, Lack of sleep, poor nutrition etc. Teaching faculty has a stress of corrections, strain heavily on their vocal chords, back bone problems, standing for long hours and so on.

Social Stressors: Social stressors are things that have to do with our connectedness (or lack of it) with other people and the communities we live in. Few of the biggest causes of stress for women in teaching are balancing family, children education, relations with extended family, relatives. On the official side, students performance, upgrading personal skills to meet professional requirements etc.

Emotional Stressors: Emotions can also be one of the main causes of stress. Women often feel, we don't feel like we look as good or work as fast or make as much money as someone else. It is frequently the result of our own self-talk and self-criticism. It is called self infliction among women resulting into stress, many a times.

Effects of stress on Health: In a stressful situation women tend to experience a physical response, her nervous system springs into action, releasing hormones that prepare her to either fight or take off. It's called the "fight or flight" response, and that's why, she may notice that her heartbeat speeds up; breathing gets faster, muscles tense which leads her to sweat. This kind of stress in women is known as short-term and temporary (acute stress) the body usually recovers quickly from it.

But if your stress system stays activated for a long period of time (chronic stress) then, it can lead to more serious health problems. The constant stress in women can lead to wear and tear of the body, causing it to age more quickly and making it more prone to illness.

The symptoms of acute stress / temporary stress and chronic stress /long term stress are among women are-

Acute Stress	Chronic stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Fatigue • Sleeping difficulty • Difficulty in concentrating • Stomach upset • Irritability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression • High blood pressure • Abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia) • Hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) • Heart disease • Heart attack • Heartburn, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome • Upset of stomach -- cramps, constipation, and diarrhea • Weight gain or loss • Changes in sex drive • Fertility problems • Flare-ups of asthma or arthritis • Skin problems such as acne, eczema, and psoriasis

Table 1

2.1. How to Reduce Stress

Stress in women can lead to Distress.

Therefore women should De-Stress herself to relieve her Stress. Women should become a master over their actions rather than a prisoner of their reactions

Tips to reduce stress are-

- Try progressive relaxation
- Try some light yoga
- Meditate
- Breathe deep
- Spray some favourite perfume
- Listen to music
- Laugh it off.
- Drink tea
- Exercise
- Try guided visualization
- Join a religious community
- Chew gum- studies show that chewing gum can reduce cortisol levels
- Get a massage
- Try self-hypnosis
- Take a nap
- Hang out with friends
- Do an art work
- Take a walk

2.2. What Is Positive Stress

Stress in women can also have a positive effect:

- Increases motivation and awareness, she can excel in her work place
- Helps to cope up with challenging situations, and scale new heights in her profession
- Stress helps her to survive when she confronts threatening situations at home and also at work place

To overcome stress women have to change her attitude towards life and learn to accept her strengths and weaknesses positively. Women should not compare herself with anyone in this world. If she does so, she will be insulting herself.

2.3. Techniques to Reduce Stress Levels

To reinforce and re-establish her faith and confidence in herself, women need counseling. If she is not provided counseling, she may become abnormal.

Counseling is assistance extended to a needy person, when she is perfectly normal. In counseling there is no medication or clinical treatment provided. It is tremendous effort and unlimited patience from the counselor, which brings change in the counselee. It is a planned attempt to drive home basic realities of life in a systematic method. It is an attempt to change oneself, so that world appears to be a beautiful place to live.

Stress Management Techniques: Change your thinking, Change your behaviour, Change your lifestyle.

2.3.1. So Everyday—She Needs to Promise Herself That

- I will smile, as it keeps me happy
- I will make others happy, as it makes me happy
- I will not get angry, as it spoils my health
- I will not become a slave to any habits, because I am superior
- I live my life, as it is a gift from god

2.4. What Is Stress Management?

Take control; manage your time instead of letting it manage you. Use a to-do list, follow a written plan, set goals and follow them religiously. Avoid procrastination (defer action): a major cause of stress. Make a realistic list of things you need to do each day. Do the most important things first. That way, even if you don't finish the list, you get the most important things done. Take a break: Sometimes it is better to get away from the situation for a short time. Take a brisk walk, focus on pleasant thoughts. Then, go back to the task feeling refreshed and ready to tackle whatever it is you have to do.

2.4.1. Join the Crowd

Even though you may think you are the only person in the world who is experiencing stress, the fact is that everyone experiences it sometime. Talk to someone: Find someone you trust, discuss the problems and look for solutions put it in perspective: Chances are, this is only one small part of the rest of your life

2.4.2. Visualize

Sit comfortably and think of a favorite place. Imagine yourself in a successful situation. Breathe: Sit quietly, and breathe deeply and slowly. Continue for five or six breaths. It is calming and the extra dose of oxygen increases the brain's thinking ability. Lighten up: Take responsibility for your feelings and actions. When you get angry, take a break and cool down before you act. Learn always to count from one to ten or more. Use it: A little stress is a good thing. Athletes use it to increase performance. If you are experiencing a small amount of anxiety, it can help to keep you active and alert. Use it to increase your performance.

2.5. Planning Healthy Life Style

Few handy tips to de stress

1. Always tell yourself- I am the heroine in my life
2. My family needs me
3. When you feel tired and stressed out – drink water and count 1- 10
4. We eat to live but not live to eat- enjoy your food, eat healthy food
5. When you are sad blame your stars, when you are happy thank your stars
6. Forgive and forget
7. Forget and forgive
8. Smile – it will take you a mile
9. Plan everyday – short term goal
10. Continue to plan each coming day- long term goal
11. If you can't fight, flight
12. Remember anger is one letter short of danger

3. Data Analysis & Interpretation

3.1. Personal Profile of the Respondents

- Out of total number of respondents, 68% of them are working by choice which consists of both married and unmarried teachers.
- Most of the respondents who are working as teachers come from nuclear families (76%) and only 24% belong to joint families.
- The data collected shows the 88% of the respondents earn between 1 – 3 lakhs and only few earn above 5 lakhs.

Status	Plan Day to Day Activities			Share Feelings with Others			Help from Family Members		
	yes	no	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Single	14	0	14	11	3	14	14	0	14
	28.0%	.0%	28.0%	22.0%	6.0%	28.0%	28.0%	.0%	28.0%
Married	31	5	36	32	4	36	31	5	36
	62.0%	10.0%	72.0%	64.0%	8.0%	72.0%	62.0%	10.0%	72.0%
Total	45	5	50	43	7	50	45	5	50
	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%	86.0%	14.0%	100.0%	90.0%	10.0%	100.0%

Table 2: Marital status vs. Plan day to day activities/share feelings with others/Help from family members in house hold activities

Source: Primary Data

About 90% of the respondents plan their day to day activities and only 10% do not plan. Most of them want to share their feelings either with their friends or family and about 90% of them get help from the family member in their house hold work.

Status	Types of Stress				
	physical stress	mental stress	emotional stress	All	Total
Single	5	7	2	0	14
	10.0%	14.0%	4.0%	.0%	28.0%
Married	12	7	4	13	36
	24.0%	14.0%	8.0%	26.0%	72.0%
Total	17	14	6	13	50
	34.0%	28.0%	12.0%	26.0%	100.0%

Chi – Square Test:0.036

Table 3: Marital status vs. Types of stress

Source: Primary Data

The analysis shows that, among married women 24% are suffering from physical stress, 14% mental stress, 8% emotional stress and 26% have all the above mentioned stress. Whereas among unmarried women only 10% have physical stress, 14% have mental stress 4% have emotional stress.

The chi-square test result is less than 0.5, hence there is no relation between marital status and type of stress.

Status	Reasons for stress								Total
	peer/colleagues	seniors	family	lack of personal life	personal illness	lack of social life	others	all	
Single	0	1	1	0	1	0	8	3	14
	.0%	2.0%	2.0%	.0%	2.0%	.0%	16.0%	6.0%	28.0%
Married	5	1	7	2	2	5	9	5	36
	10.0%	2.0%	14.0%	4.0%	4.0%	10.0%	18.0%	10.0%	72.0%
Total	5	2	8	2	3	5	17	8	50
	10.0%	4.0%	16.0%	4.0%	6.0%	10.0%	34.0%	16.0%	100.0%

Chi – Square Test:0.215

Table 4: Marital status vs. Reasons for Stress

Source: Primary Data

The table shows that most of the married women who are in teaching field are stressed due to their family responsibilities followed by lack of social life, peer groups etc. whereas most of the unmarried women are stressed not due to any of the above reasons.

The chi-square test result is less than 0.5, hence there is no relation between marital status and reasons for stress.

Status	Situation for stress				
	working hours	normal hours	travelling hours	All	Total
Single	8	2	3	1	14
	16.0%	4.0%	6.0%	2.0%	28.0%
Married	13	8	7	8	36
	26.0%	16.0%	14.0%	16.0%	72.0%
Total	21	10	10	9	50
	42.0%	20.0%	20.0%	18.0%	100.0%

Chi – Square Test:0.445

Table 5: Marital status vs. Situation for stress

Source: Primary Data

The analysis shows that 22 % of women in teaching profession who are married feel stressed during working hours, 16% feel stressed during normal hours, 14% during travelling hours and 16% feel stressed in all the above there situations. Whereas unmarried feel stressed during working hours.

The chi-square test result is less than 0.5, hence there is no relation between marital status and situations when the people are stressed.

Status	Relieve your stress							Total
	watching television	listening to music	reading books	performing your hobby	spending time with family	gossiping with friends	others	
Single	3	3	2	0	4	1	1	14
	6.0%	6.0%	4.0%	.0%	8.0%	2.0%	2.0%	28.0%
Married	4	11	3	4	6	1	7	36
	8.0%	22.0%	6.0%	8.0%	12.0%	2.0%	14.0%	72.0%
Total	7	14	5	4	10	2	8	50
	14.0%	28.0%	10.0%	8.0%	20.0%	4.0%	16.0%	100.0%

Chi – Square Test:0.528

Table 6: Marital status vs. methods to relieve stress

Source: Primary Data

The analysis shows that most of the married teachers relieve their stress by listening to music, followed by spending time with the family. Most of the unmarried teachers relieve their stress by watching television.

The chi- square test shows that there is a relationship between marital status and method of relieving stress.

5. Conclusion

- Most of the respondents (90%) plan their day to day activities which results into a positive stress and enhances their abilities in performance.
- Majority of the respondents share their feeling with others which helps them to reduce their stress.
- 90% of the respondents receive support from their family, which helps them to continue their profession
- Most of the female teachers suffer from physical stress which is mainly due to long standing hours during their teaching which puts stress on their back and legs.
- Most of the people relieve their stress by listening to music which shows that people need a sound mind to relax.

6. Suggestions

Every woman in teaching field need to counsel herself and feel,

1. I am doing my job to bring a positive change in this country
2. Teaching is my societal responsibility
3. I have an ability to bring change in the younger generation
4. I have a duty to make the performer perform better
5. Every student is indirectly my child
6. I am contributing to build an educated nation
7. My resources are being rightly used
8. I am respected because of my profession
9. I have to use my talent and give back to the society

10. Teaching is my profession, passion, pride, power, policy and my potential.

Lastly, we don't thank the tree which gives us fruits; instead we throw stones on the same tree. Same way, students don't appreciate their teachers. But the gratitude is felt on some day in their lives. So as teachers, we should say, when I am sad I will curse my stars, when I am happy I will thank my stars. This way we will never lose our self-confidence.

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