

Home Environment: Stress and Mess

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In the scenario of ever rising number of urban married women entering formal workforce, there has been an increasing amount of work stress both at home and workplace on them. Therefore the present study was undertaken to analyze the impact of occupational stress on home environment as perceived by selected respondents. Results showed that the respondents could not look after the children and family members and, moreover, irrespective of the occupational status they hold, everyone faces a medium level of stress in their respective work.

The present social structure reflects the changes that have come through changing frame of time. A major breakthrough was the growing education and economic independence among women. The economic pressures of inflation, influence of the women's movement and the psychological need to develop one's 'self identity' are encouraging the women to take a more active role outside the home to pursue full time careers.

Unfortunately, work which is deemed to be a source of life-giving to individuals and in turn to families with which an

individual is attached is working just in opposite direction. Organizations put pressure, explicit and implicit, on employees to put more time, stay late at night, come in on weekends, take work home and so on to help the firm improve its competitive position. The norm of a 35-44 hour/week has given way to longer hours in the full-time working week. With the dawn of a new century, the information age is rapidly replacing the industrial age, bringing with it new norms of work and longer hours of work involving harder and more challenging tasks and the need to be multi-skilled. The globalization



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process which has resulted in increased and intense competition has brought in significant changes in the workplace. By and large, it is believed that humankind spends a major portion of his or her time and energy in this realm due to the changing nature of work in response to new demands and environmental pressures.

Occupational stress is a stress taken away to home from work place. Occupational stress may have an impact on home and family environment. 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 point clearly to the complexities which often arise in home due to stress of work having been brought home.

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 analyze the impact of occupational stress on home environment as perceived by selected respondents.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in city of Coimbatore of Tamilnadu state. A representative sample of 50 women respondents from three professional groups namely bank employees, doctors, and lecturers 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 and the time period of the study is from April 2008 to September 2008. The data collected were tabulated and suitable statistical tools such as frequency, percentages, average ranking analysis and chi square test were used for analysis of data.

Results and Discussions

The results of the study are classified under three main heads namely:

- I. Socio-personal Characteristics of Working Women and their Families
- II. Extent of Occupational Stress Level in Selected Working Women and
- III. Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment

Socio Personal Characteristics of Working Women and their Families

Age: It can be seen in Table 1 that age of all the respondents varied from 21 to 60 years. A large number (49 percent) of respondents were in the category of 31 to 40 years and about one-third (31.33 percent) from 41-50 years of age. There were only about 14 percent in the age groups of 21-30 and nine percent in the age group of 51-60 years. It was further observed that among bank employees 36 percent were in age group of 31 to 40. In category of doctors 54 percent were from age group of 31 to 40 years while only eight percent of doctors belonged to age group of 21 or 30 years. Whereas in case of lecturers, maximum number (48 percent) of respondents percent were in age group of 31 to 40 years.

Marital Status: It can be seen in table 2 that maximum number i.e. 78 percent of the respondents was married at the time of study whereas 13.33 percent were unmarried. Only a small number i.e. 4.67 percent and four percent were widow and divorced respectively in the total sample. It is further observed that in the category of bank employees 66 percent of the respondents were married. Among doctors, four percent were widow, eight percent were unmarried and rest 88 percent were married. In case of lecturers, eight percent were widow, six percent were divorced and 80 percent were married.

Educational Qualification: The education of respondents as depicted in the table 3 shows that a maximum number (64 percent) of the respondents were post graduates while 29.33 percent and 4.67 percent were having graduation and PhD degrees respectively. It is further observed from the

Table 1: Age Group of the Respondents

Age Group		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
21 to 30 yrs	No	14	4	3	21
	%	28.00	8.00	6.00	14.00
31 to 40 yrs	No	18	27	24	69
	%	36.00	54.00	48.00	46.00
41 to 50 yrs	No	16	13	18	47
	%	32.00	26.00	36.00	31.33
51 to 60 yrs	No	2	6	5	13
	%	4.00	12.00	10.00	8.67
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 2: Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Married	No	33	44	40	117
	%	66.00	88.00	80.00	78.00
Unmarried	No	13	4	3	20
	%	26.00	8.00	6.00	13.33
Widow	No	1	2	4	7
	%	2.00	4.00	8.00	4.67
Divorced	No	3	0	3	6
	%	6.00	0.00	6.00	4.00
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

table that among bank employees maximum number of respondents i.e. 70 percent were graduates as against a maximum of 82 percent doctors who are post graduates. In the category of lecturers, 86 percent were post graduates while 14 percent are holding PhD degree.

Monthly Income: Regarding the monthly income it may be observed that nearly half i.e. 49.33 percent of the respondents were having income between Rs.10001-20000 per month, While 30.00 percent of the respondents were

earning income between Rs.20001-30000 per month. Another 10.67 percent of the respondents had income of more than Rs.30000 per month, whereas only 10 percent were earning an income of up to Rs.10000 per month. It is further observed that maximum number of bank employees, doctors and lecturers were in the moderate income group (Rs.10001 to Rs.20000 per month) category.

Family Type: It is also observed from the Table 5 that 80 percent of the families were nuclear and only 20 percent of

Table 3: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Upto school level	No	3	0	0	3
	%	6.00	0.00	0.00	2.00
Graduate	No	35	9	0	44
	%	70.00	18.00	0.00	29.33
Postgraduate	No	12	41	43	96
	%	24.00	82.00	86.00	64.00
Doctorate	No	0	0	7	7
	%	0.00	0.00	14.00	4.67
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 4: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Upto Rs.10000	No	14	0	1	15
	%	28.00	0.00	2.00	10.00
Rs.10000 to Rs.20000	No	25	24	25	74
	%	50.00	48.00	50.00	49.33
Rs.20000 to Rs.30000	No	7	17	21	45
	%	14.00	34.00	42.00	30.00
More than Rs.30000	No	4	9	3	16
	%	8.00	18.00	6.00	10.67
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 5: Family Type of the Respondents

Family Type		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Nuclear	No	45	40	35	120
	%	90.00	80.00	70.00	80.00
Joint	No	5	10	15	30
	%	10.00	20.00	30.00	20.00
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 6: Family Size of the Respondents

Family Size		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Small (Upto 3)	No	42	35	35	112
	%	84.00	70.00	70.00	74.67
Medium (4-6)	No	5	9	10	24
	%	10.00	18.00	20.00	16.00
Large (> 6)	No	3	6	5	14
	%	6.00	12.00	10.00	9.33
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

the families were of joint type. Majority of the respondents' family were nuclear irrespective of their occupation.

Family Size: Regarding family size shown in table 6, in the total sample three-fourth of the respondents (74.67 percent) was from small family and 9.33 percent from large and rest (16.00 percent) from medium families. More number of bank employees, doctors and lecturers were from small families.

Extent of Occupational Stress Level in Selected Working Women

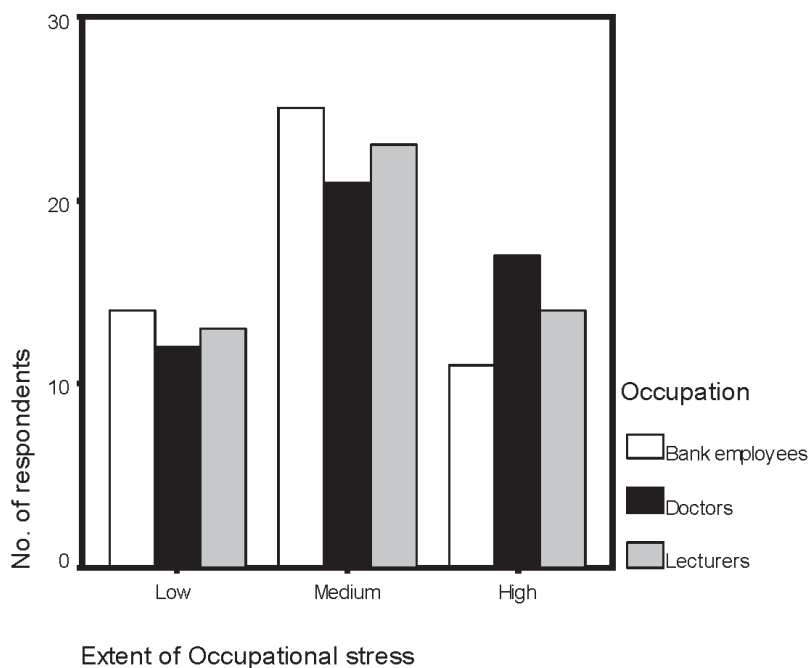
A well developed and widely used Occupational Stress Index (OSI) in the Indian context (Srivastava and Singh, 1981) was chosen to assess the occupational stress of the sample. The questionnaire is consisted of 12 statements, important aspects included in the scale were; role over load, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group or political pressure, responsibility for person, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic

impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and un-profitability with five alternative responses e.g., five for strongly agree, four for agree three for neither agree nor disagree, two for disagree and one for strongly disagree. Total score on this scale is considered for the assessment of occupational stress. More the score on this scale indicate more stress. The respondents total score on stress is divided into three categories i.e., low, medium and high based on its mean and standard deviation. (Mean + or - 0.5 (SD)

It is interesting to note from Table 7 that 26 percent of the respondent was found to be having low occupational stress. Nearly half i.e. 46 percent of the respondents were having medium occupational stress as against 28 percent who were having high stress. It may be further seen that a maximum of (50 percent) bank employees were having medium stress followed by lecturers (46 percent) and doctors (42 percent).

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents according to Extent of Occupational Stress

Stress Level		Bank Employees	Doctors	Lecturers	Total
Low	No	14	12	13	39
	%	28.00	24.00	26.00	26.00
Medium	No	25	21	23	69
	%	50.00	42.00	46.00	46.00
High	No	11	17	14	42
	%	22.00	34.00	28.00	28.00
Total	No	50	50	50	150
	%	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Exhibit 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Extent of Occupational Stress**Table 7 (a): Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.787	4	.775
Likelihood Ratio	1.798	4	.773
Linear-by-Linear Association	.295	1	.587
N of Valid Cases	150		

Chi-square test was used to check whether there is significant difference among the respondents (bank employees, doctors and lecturers) and the extent of occupational stress at five percent level of significance. The following hypothesis was framed and the result was displayed in table 7 (a).

H₀: "There is no significant difference among the respondents (bank employees, doctors and lecturers) and their extent of occupational stress."

With the significant value of 0.775 at five percent level of significance, it is concluded that there is no significant difference among the respondents (bank employees,

doctors and lecturers) and their extent of occupational stress and hence the hypothesis is accepted.

Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment

A closer look at the scenario makes us realize that working women face new set of problems involving both family and profession. As professional women they are expected to be committed to their work "just like men" at the same time as they are normatively required to give priority to their family. Further, the position seems to complicate when the woman attains motherhood. It is known that as the roles increase,

Table 8: Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment

Occupation	Bank Employees		Doctors		Lecturers	
	AR	FR	AR	FR	AR	FR
Cooking	3.64	4	3.78	3	3.62	4
Care of utensils	2.7	8	2.54	10	2.8	8
Care of clothes	3.76	3	3.76	4	3.64	3
Floor sweeping & mopping	2.6	10	2.56	9	2.76	9
General home maintenance	3.24	7	3.46	6	3.14	7
Attending children	4.44	1	4.52	1	4.36	1
Attending other members of family	4.02	2	4.04	2	4.06	2
Purchasing household articles	3.32	6	3.12	7	3.4	5
Arranging food items	2.68	9	2.58	8	2.66	10
Involvement in social and cultural activities	3.52	5	3.6	5	3.32	6

so do the responsibilities. Table 8 illustrates the impact of occupational stress among the selected working women, their mean scores are stated (AR= Average Rank) and based on the mean scores final rank (FR = Final Rank) was given.

Table 8 explains the impact of stress on home environment. As seen clearly from the table that higher mean scores are given to "Attending children" irrespective of the occupation (bank employees with 4.44, doctors with 4.52 and lecturers with 4.36) and next "Attending other members of family" i.e. 4.02, 4.04 and 4.06. It clearly shows that in spite of stress, looking after the children and family still remains on the top priority of the respondents.

In case of bank employees, the third rank goes to "care of clothes" with 3.76 score, then to "cooking" with 3.64, "Involvement in social and cultural activities" with 3.52, "Purchasing household articles" with 3.32, "General home maintenance" with 3.24, "Care of utensils" with 2.7, "Arranging food items" with 2.68 and finally "Floor sweeping and mopping" with 2.6 score.

In case of Doctors, the third rank goes to "cooking" with 3.78 score, then to "care of clothes" with 3.76, "Involvement in social and cultural activities" with 3.6, "General home maintenance" with 3.46, "Purchasing household articles" with 3.12, "Arranging food items" with 2.58, "Floor sweeping and mopping" with 2.56, and finally "Care of utensils" with 2.54 score.

In case of lecturers, third rank goes to "care of clothes" with 3.64 score, then to "cooking" with 3.62, "Purchasing household articles" with 3.4, "Involvement in social and cultural activities" with 3.32, "General home maintenance" with 3.14, "Care of utensils" with 2.8, "Floor sweeping and mopping" with 2.76 and finally "Arranging food items" with 2.68 score.

Conclusion

Women were subjected to a greater stress as the demands of home and career at times caused conflicts, striving for multi role duties had resulted in conflict stress, ambivalence and overload. Impact of stress on home environment showed that they could not look after the children and family members due to their occupational work stress. Though the conflicts existed, women had realized the advantages of being employed, which act as fruitful measure to run their family and to be proud in the society.

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