

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE STRESS EXPERIENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES OF WORKING WOMEN OF BHOPAL

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ABSTRACT:

This study helps us to find out the stressors faced by working women in Bhopal. This qualitative study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the stress experiences and coping strategies of working women. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on working women from diverse industries and occupations, exploring their perceptions of stress, its impact on their personal and professional lives, and the strategies they employ to manage stress. It can lead to physiological discomfort, some kind of emotional shutdown and strained relationships with other people.

Keywords: Qualitative Study, Stress Experiences, Coping Strategies, Working Women, Bhopal

INTRODUCTION

Stress refers to an individual's reaction to a disturbing factor in the lives of people. Stress can harm an individual's life, attitude towards a beloved one, and health condition. Nowadays, women play a dual role as a housewife and working women. So, the family sometimes does not support a woman to leave the household work for job at work.

Working women face a unique set of challenges that can lead to stress, impacting their physical and mental well-being. This qualitative study aims to explore the stress experiences and coping strategies of working women, gaining a deeper understanding of their perceptions and experiences. Women's position in India usually pertains to the home and is limited to their problems. As globalization and industrialization started, women were encouraged to be educated and work as their wish. Stress is defined by "The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology" as a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances and generated by the overall state of health or fitness and experiences that are hard to handle.

OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

- *To study the factors responsible for stress on women employees.
- *To know the level of stress
- *To know the health issues due to stress.
- *To study the effects of coping mechanisms like yoga ,meditation on the stress level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a great deal of research on women at work and stress, and many of these studies identify factors that affect not only a working women of well-being, but also the level of stress she experiences. Varied studies have shown that stress rendered by the workplace for women correlates with role overload, gender bias, and inadequate support systems. Women report greater stress than men according to the American Psychological Association, especially related to work-life balance and caregiving responsibilities.

This model proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), known as the transactional model of stress, describes the process of how one appraises stressors and responds to them. Coping mechanisms, including emotional support and problem-solving strategies, play a large role in stress, as highlighted by their research.

Indeed, a recent report outlined here by the World Health Organization (WHO) pinpointed workplace discrimination, pay inequity, and partial implementation.

FINDINGS:

This qualitative study highlights the stress experiences and ways to cope up with the of working women in Bhopal. These women need social support, self care ,respect and love from the family and closed ones so that they can easily balance the work and personal life. Physical exercises like running, walking ,yoga and meditation are very useful and can help women to cope up with the stress.

CAUSES OF STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN

- Heavy Workload and Pressure: So many tasks with deadlines and a lot of demands at work can be too much.

- Work and Life Battle: The juggling act to ensure both work and family receives equal attention and energy leaves women exhausted.
- Gender Bias and Discrimination: They face unequal pay, fewer opportunities for promotions and workplace bias, which contribute to their stress.
- Household Responsibilities: Women still do a disproportionate amount of household and caregiving work, contributing to their daily stress.
- Lack of Support Systems: Limited workplace flexibility, childcare options or emotional support can complicate stress management.

COPING STRATEGIES

- Better Time Management: Prioritizing tasks and setting realistic goals can help women manage their workload effectively.
- Supportive Workplaces: Flexible schedules, paid maternity leave, and mental health resources can ease stress.
- Health and Wellness Practices: Regular exercise, meditation, and self-care routines help improve resilience.
- Strong Support Networks: Family, friends, and colleagues can provide emotional support and encouragement.
- Skill Development: Gaining new skills and growing professionally can boost confidence and reduce stress.

HOW ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP

- Flexible Work Policies: Options like remote work and flexible hours can help women manage their responsibilities better.
- Gender Equality Efforts: Ensuring equal pay, career advancement, and inclusive work environments can reduce workplace stress.
- Employee Wellness Programs: Workshops on stress management, mental health support, and recreational activities can improve overall well-being.
- Encouraging Open Conversations: Supportive leadership and mentorship opportunities can help women navigate challenges more easily.

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