Role Stress And Preventive Management

A Khetarpal, G Kochar

Citation

Abstract

Role stress is the stress experienced by the persons because of their role (job) in the organization. They assume a role based on the expectation of the self and others at work place. The family members try to adjust their roles within the family and a change is being felt in their attitudes. The present study was an attempt to provide a preventive and positive approach to women experiencing stress at work and at home. Those who have the Social Support of their family and friends are able to cope better with stress. To find out the level of role stress and to identify key role stressors, the OSI inventory by A.K Srivastava was used. It was found that majority of women (40%) were under moderately low level of stress followed by 36% women who reported moderately high level of stress. Women experiencing very high or low stress are 12 % in each case. The key stressors which affect maximum number of women are Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment and Under-participation.

INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of women are becoming career conscious and professional in their outlook. Earlier women preferred jobs like nursing, medicine, clerical but now the number of women executives is on the increase. The reasons for such a change are: increase in women's education, changing socio-cultural values, increasing awareness and consciousness in women and the rise in economic independence. Women are in a dilemma facing queries regarding self and her rights. Her inner conflict keeps on puzzling her regarding existence in reality and what people talk about (Gracia, June, 2005). Balancing work and family frequently means irregular work hours for women professionals leading to stress and various problems related to it (Snell, 2004). The working woman, regardless of whether she is married or single, faces higher stress levels. This is not so much in the work place but at home also. She may feel guilty for leaving her children while she works; this not only increases her stress but also reduces her job satisfaction. Role stress is the stress experienced by the persons because of their role (job) in the organization. They assume a role based on the expectation of the self and others at work place. Working women compose a large proportion of the workforce today and for them to be working as a manager is really a challenge which leads to stress in their life. Women performing dual role are under stress and several factors at home and at the work place cause it. Conditions that cause stress are called stressors. They may

be overload of work, responsibility, inadequate authority, non-cooperation from subordinates, hostile boss, poor working conditions and conflicts in the organization. Social Support is the physical and emotional comfort given by our family, friends, co-workers and others. It's knowing that we are part of a community of people who love and care for us and value and think well of us. We all need people we can depend on during both the good times and the bad. Maintaining a healthy social support network is hard work and something that requires ongoing effort over time. People are emotionally supportive when they tell us that they care about us and think well of us. It is important to have at least one close friend. (Cohen, S.,2000) also tells us that social support does the best job of protecting us from the effects of stress when we believe that emotional support is easy to come by and we have at least one person we can confide in.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

One hundred women professionals in the age group 25-45 years were selected from various professions. There were Doctors, Lecturers, Directors, Managers, Principals and Engineers. They were from different income groups. Their marital status could be single/married/divorced/widows. The places selected for conducting the present study were cities of Yamunanagar, Jagadhri, Kurukshetra, Chandigarh and Panchkula. A meeting was arranged with the selected respondents to confirm their participation in the study. Women selected for this study were assured of absolute

anonymity.

Figure 1

Distribution of respondents according to their Profession

S.NO	Profession	Yamunanagar	Jagadhri	Kurukshetra	Chandigarh	Panchkula
1	Doctors	5	5	3	-	-
2	Lecturer	5	5	5	5	5
3	Director	5	-	5	-	7
4	Principal	5	-	-	8	5
5	Manager	-	-	2	10	-
6	Engineer	3	2	2	-	8

The survey method was used to gather information for the study. Based on the objectives of the study, the Standardized Questionnaire was distributed. The present study was an attempt to provide a practical and positive approach of using social support as a coping technique to working women under stress.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

To find out the level of role stress and to identify key role stressors, the OSI inventory by A.K Srivastava and A.P. Singh (1984) was used. The scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. The items relate to almost all relavent components of the job life which causes stress. It has questions related to twelve types of role stressors. The score of the inventory varies from 0-230. The scores were divided into following levels--Very High, Moderately High, Moderately Low and Very Low. The statistical analysis was carried out using tools like percentages; mean score, variance and standard deviation.

Below P^{25} – Very Low Stress Between P^{26} and P^{75} -- Moderate Stress Above P^{76} —Very High Stress

Any score of greater than or equal to mean plus standard deviation means very high level of role stress. Any score less than mean minus standard deviation means very low level of low stress. Intermediate ranges from mean to mean plus standard deviation and from mean to mean minus standard deviation implies moderately high and moderately low level of stress respectively. A social support survey was done to know the sources and extent of social support women had in their life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall level of role stress on women professionals was analysed. It was found that majority of women (40%) were under moderately low level of stress followed by 36% women who reported moderately high level of stress (Table 1).Women professionals experiencing very high or low stress are 12 % in each case. The analysis proves that women professionals experience moderate stress. The data was

further analysed to find difference between the stress levels of women from different professions.

The difference in the role stress in different professionals was statistically tested. The t-value was calculated at 23 d.f .It came out to be less than the table value. at 0.05 level of significance. Thus there is no significant difference between role stress being experienced by women belonging to different professions.

Figure 2

Table 1: Level of role stress in Women Professionals

Level of role stress	N =150	%
Very High	18	(12)
Moderately High	54	(36)
Moderately Low	60	(40)
Very Low	18	(12)

Twelve different types of role stressors were studied. As each respondent varies in response to different type of role stress, it was assumed that a role stress will assume a key role only if it effects more than 40% of the women professionals (Goyal, P.,2004). The key stressors which affect maximum number of women are Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment and Underparticipation (Table 2).

Figure 3

Table 2: Women Professionals classified by the type of role stress

Role Stressors	Very High	Moderately High	Moderately Low	Very Low	Total
Role Overload	20(13.3%)	25(16.6%)	50(33.3%)	55(36.6)	150
Role Ambiguity	35(23.3%)	50(33.3%)	35(23.3%)	30(20%)	150
Role Conflict	20(13.3%)	20(13.3%)	55(36.6)	55(36.6)	150
Unreasonable Group And Political Pressure	25(16.6%)	45(30%)	40(26.6%)	40(26.6%)	150
Responsibility For Persons	35(23.3%)	45(30%)	30(33.3%)	40(26.6%)	150
Under- participation	40(26.6%)	50(33.3%)	30(20%)	30(20%)	150
Powerlessness	35(23.3%)	45(30%)	40(26.6%)	30(20%)	150
Poor Peer Relations	45(30%)	45(30%)	30(20%)	30(20%)	150
Intrinsic Impoverishment	45(30%)	45(30%)	40(26.6%)	20(13.3%)	150
Low Status	20(13.3%)	25(16.6%)	50(33.3%)	55(36.6)	150
Strenuous Working Conditions	40(26.6%)	35(23.3%)	35(23.3%)	40(26.6%)	150
Un -profitability.	45(30%)	40(26.6%)	35(23.3%)	30(20%)	150

*Figures inside the parenthesis indicates percentages

Women professionals have to perform dual role of a maid and a manager, so they feel rushed but are under moderate level of stress. Social support can further reduce their stress levels. Many of the people who are a part of our lives can provide social support. These include our parents, spouse or partner, children, siblings, other family members, friends,

co-workers, neighbours, health professionals and sometimes even strangers. We are unlikely to have all of our support needs met by just one person. Also, different people may be able to provide different types of support .In general, the best support comes from the people we are closest to. Research has shown that receiving support from people we have close emotional ties to does more for our emotional and physical health than support provided by people we are not particularly close to. There is a significant relationship between social support and psychological well-being. During times of stress, social support helps people feel less upset. There is also evidence that workplace stress is lower when people receive support from their co-workers or the company they work for. Bradley, et.al, (2005) reported that self-esteem, social support and religious coping acted as protective factors for post-traumatic stress disorders. On the other hand, unhappy or poor quality relationships with other people have been shown to have a negative impact on mental health and well-being. Conflictual, distressing relationships may do us more psychological harm than positive social relationships can do us good.

CONCLUSION

The key stressors which affect maximum number of women professionals are Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment and Under-participation. This is because women are becoming more and more career conscious, they want to accept challenges, improve performance and want to become socially and economically independent. The women professionals were of the view that now days, it was difficult to survive on single income, so their working is very much accepted by family members. The family members try to adjust their roles within the family and a change is being felt in their attitudes also. Besides this, due to better working conditions, better transportation facilities and improved technology, the stress on women professionals is reduced and their efficiency has increased. They have the support of their family and friends and are able to cope better with stress. Social support provides us with important benefits in terms of both our physical and emotional health. Some of the other benefits of social support include improved marital and job satisfaction and lower stress levels. If the women professionals want to be accepted as efficient homemakers as well as employees, they have to make use of effective stress management techniques, use appropriate coping patterns, must be optimistic and have a positive attitude in life.

Ten Ways To Increase Social Support Network

- Don't be afraid to take social risks.

- Get more from the support you have

- Ask for help

- Make a plan

- Create new opportunities

- Let go of unhealthy ties

- Protect your marriage

- Be a joiner

- Be patient

- Avoid negative relationships

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Author Information

Abha Khetarpal
D.A.V College For Girls

G. K. Kochar
Chairperson and Prof., Department Of Home-Science, Kurukshetra University