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Level of stress among working and non-working women in Rewa district

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Abstract

The current study was conducted to compare the level of stress and association among working and non-working women residing in Rewa district. PSLE scale developed by Singh and Kaur (1983) ^[1] was used to measure stressful life events of the individuals. The subjects are required to report which life events they have experienced in the past one year and which life events they have experienced in life time. The housewives also face stressors in their day-to-day life which affects health and emotions. Both working and non-working women should have greater skills of emotional competence and stress management in order to have a sound health. Looking after the daily household tasks efficiently with less problems and setbacks is a skill that every woman should be endowed with, whether working or non-working in order to have a happy family life. The emotional competence, stress and health status are independent but they have a long lasting impact on the individual's life. Very few studies deal with the interrelation between stress, health status and depression of working and non working women.

Keywords: assess, association, rewa, comparison, level of stress, non-working women, working women

1. Introduction

Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now-a-days everyone talks about stress. It is cutting across all socio economic groups of population and becoming the great leveler. Not only just high pressure executives are its key victims but it also includes laborers, slum dwellers, working women, businessmen, professionals and even children. Stress is an inevitable and unavoidable component of life due to increasing complexities and competitiveness in living standards. The speed at which change is taking place in the world today is certainly overwhelming and breathe taking. In the fast changing world of today, no individual is free from stress and no profession is stress free. Everyone experiences stress, whether it is within the family, business, organization, study, work, or any other social or economical activity. Thus in modern time, stress in general and job stress in particular has become a part of the life and has received considerable attention in recent years. Stress has become the core concern in the life of everyone, but everybody wants stress-free life. Stress is a subject which is hard to avoid. Stress is a part of day-to day living. Every individual is subjected to stress either knowingly or unknowingly. Stress long considered alien to Indian lifestyle, is now a major health problem/hazard.

Stress is difficult to define precisely. The concept of stress was first introduced in the life sciences by Selye in 1936 ^[2]. It was derived from the Latin word 'stringere'; it meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. Selye (1936) ^[2] defined stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it". Further, stress was defined as "any external event or internal drive which threatens to upset the organism equilibrium" (Selye Hans, 1956) ^[3]. Another definition given by Stephen (1999) ^[4] in which stress has been stated as "a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he/she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important".

Stress affects not only individual's physical health but mental well being too. To successfully manage stress in everyday lives, individual can learn to relax and enjoy life. The best way to manage stress is to prevent it. This may not be always possible. So, the best things are to reduce stress and make life easier.

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Stress refers to any environmental, organizational and individual or internal demands, which require the individual to readjust the usual behavior pattern, Degree of stress results from events or situations that have potential to cause change. Stimuli or situations that can result in the experience of stress are called stressors. There are three major sources of stress-environmental, individual and organizational.

Stress is an occasional attribute of every person's ecology. It is the pressure, tension or worry resulting from problems of meeting the challenges in life.

2. Hypothesis

The hypotheses formulated for the present study are as follows:

1. There would be no significant difference found between life stress mean scores of working and non- working women.
2. There would be a significant difference found between depression mean scores of working and non-working women.

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample: The study was conducted on a sample of 400 women of Rewa district out of which 200 women comprised of working women group and 200 non working group (simply housewives) who were classified into two subgroups high and low on health status i.e. 100 working women high on health status and 100 working women low on health status. On the other hand 100 non working women high on health status and 100 non working low on health status.

All the subjects were matched on age sex, education and socio economic status. The age of the subjects ranged from 25 to 45 years with a mean of 32.6 years. They were all females and literate and hailed from middle class families. The working group consisted of University and College teachers of Rewa. The sampling undertaken was purposive sampling.

The working women group consisted of women who were employed as permanent teachers in higher education. They were Government and Private College teachers as well as University teachers. The non working group consisted of women who were not employed in teaching or engaged in any other profession but were simply housewives.

3.2 Method and Procedure

First and foremost Vyaktigath Prasnavali and PGI Health Questionnaire was administered on a sample of 300 working women and 300 nonworking women (N=600).

The data was collected on working and nonworking women on individual basis in home and workplace setting respectively. Standard instructions were read aloud by the investigator. As instructed the subjects filled the personal

data sheet and PGI health questionnaire. They were thanked for their cooperation and informed that they would again be approached if required. Scoring was done by counting the numbers checked by the subject.

On the basis of their symptom scores they were classified into high and low health status groups (100 high health status working women, 100 low health status working women, 100 high health status non-working women and 100 low health status non-working women).

The high health status group compared of women who showed less symptom score. The low health status group comprised of women who showed more symptom scores i.e. scored high on PGI health questionnaire (N=200).

The subjects who scored below score 9 were labeled as good health status group whereas those who scored above 9 were labeled as ill health status group. This cut of point was suggested by Wig and Verma (1973) ^[5]. Therefore it was taken into consideration.

The final sample of 400 women i.e. 200 working women and 200 non working women out of which 100 of good health and 100 ill health status) were administered the stressful life events scale and depression scale with on interval of five minutes in one session by the investigator personally. The subjects were informed about the purpose of the study and were requested to participate. Proper rapport was established and each subject was tested individually. The instructions were printed on the scales. They were read aloud by the investigator and the subjects were also asked to read on their own. If there were any doubts, they were cleared. They were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and the information given by them would be used only for research purpose. The subjects followed the instructions and gave their responses for the items stated in PSLE scale and depression scale.

Data was collected on the working and non working high health status and 1000 health status women. Finally the investigator paid thanks to the subjects who gave their cooperation. The forms were scrutinized by the investigator and systematically scored according to the appropriate scoring procedure prescribed in the manuals of the scales and later subjected to statistical analyses. Means, standard deviations, correlations and t-ratios were computed to interpret the findings and to discuss the results at length.

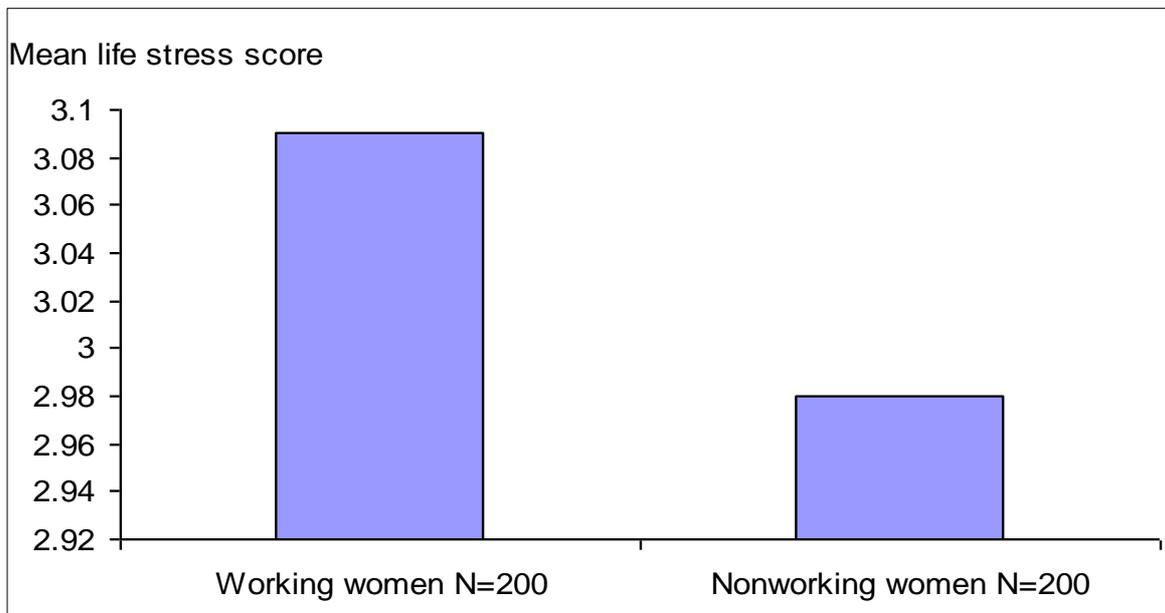
4. Results and Discussion

For the descriptive analysis of the data, means and standard deviations were computed. As it is known to all that mean is the sum of the separate scores divided by the number whereas standard deviation (SD) is the most stable index of variability.

First and foremost the means, S.D., t ratios were computed for life stress and depression obtained by working and nonworking women. They are reported in Table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1: Showing the means, S.D., mean difference SE_{MD} and t ratio for one year life stress of working and non working women.

S. No.	Working/ Nonworking	Mean	S.D.	Mean Difference	SE _{MD}	t ratio	Level of Significance
1.	Working women N=200	3.09	2.05	0.11	0.17	0.64	Insignificant at. 05 level
2.	Nonworking women N=200	2.98	1.70				



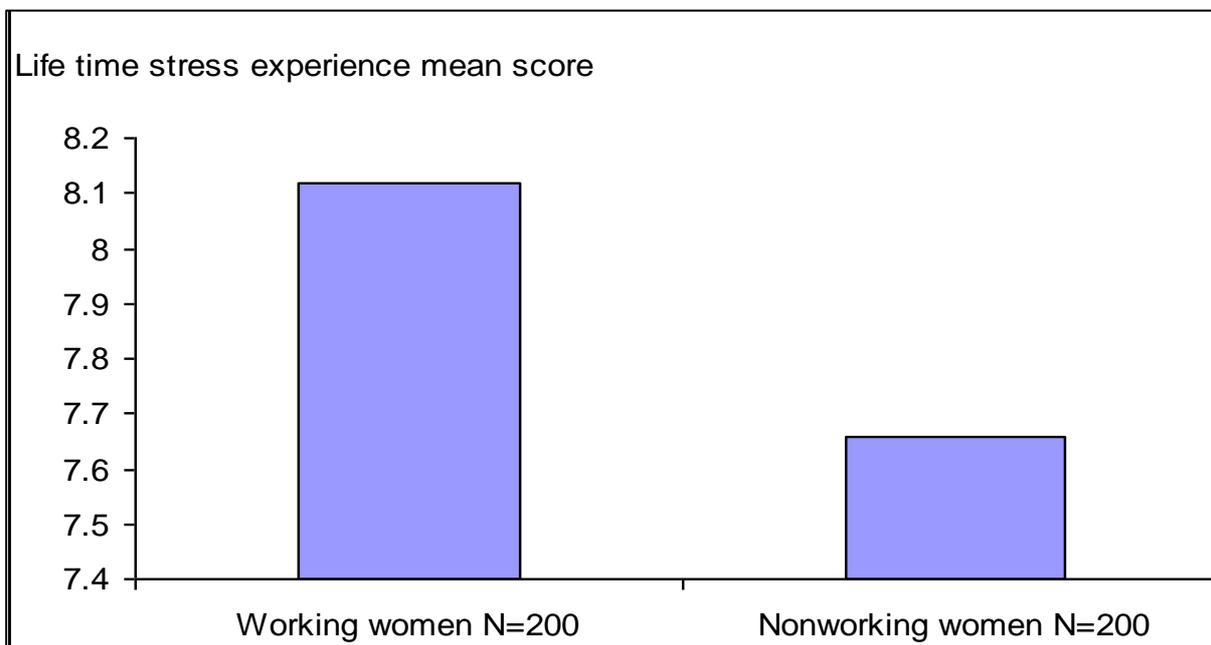
Graph 1: Showing the means of one year life stress experienced by working and non working women.

By looking at Table-1 and Graph-1, it is evident that the mean score for one year life stress experienced by working women is 3.09 whereas for non-working women it is found to be 2.98. The mean difference is 0.11 and t ratio is found

to be 0.64 which at df 398, is found to be insignificant. This shows that there is no significant difference found between the mean life stress score for past one year for working and nonworking groups.

Table 2: Showing means S.D., mean difference, SE_{MD}, t ratio for life time experienced stress of working and non working women.

S. No.	Working/ Nonworking	Mean	S.D.	Mean Difference	SE _{MD}	t ratio	Level of Significance
1.	Working women N=200	8.12	3.44	0.46	0.36	1.27	Insignificant at .05 level
2.	Nonworking women N=200	7.66	4.02				



Graph 2: Showing the means of life time experienced stress of working and non working women.

It is evident that the working and nonworking women life time experienced stress mean scores do not differ significantly (see Table 2 & Graph 2). The results clearly show that life stress is experienced by one and all and the working/nonworking does not matter at all.

The results supported the hypothesized predictions. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences found between the life stress mean scores of working and

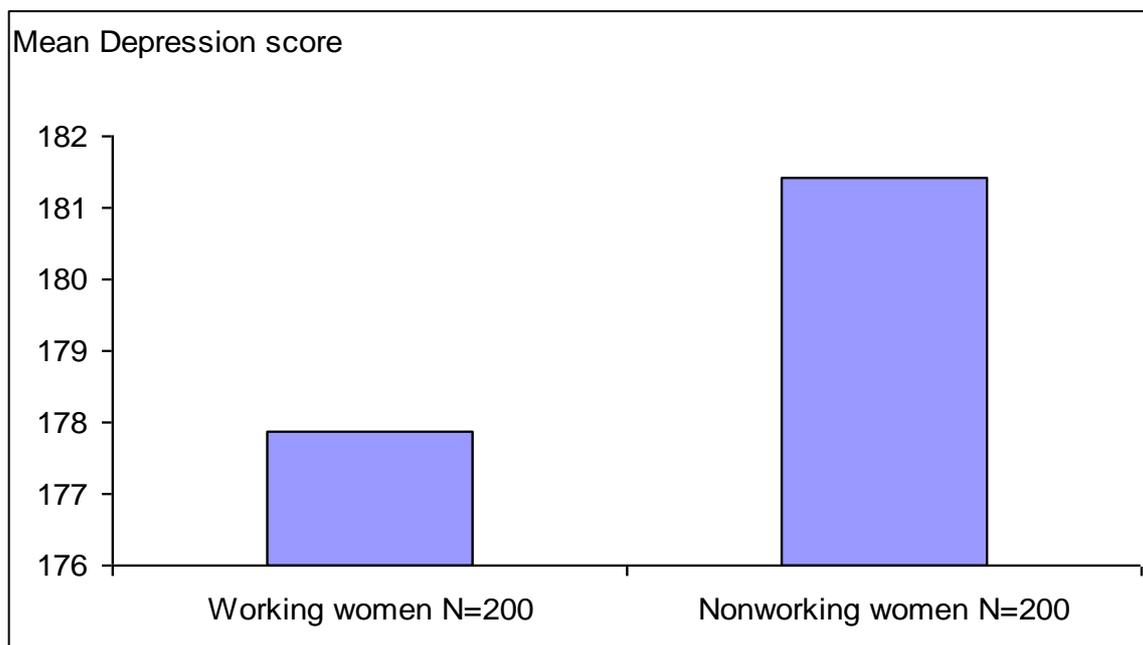
non working women (H₁). The findings supported this hypothesized prediction made in the hypothesis. The mean for one year experienced life stress score for working women was found to be 3.09 and non working women was found to be 2.98. The mean difference is 0.11; t ratio is found to be 0.64 which revealed insignificant difference. $p > .05$ level. The mean of life time experienced life stress score for working women was found to be 8.12 whereas for

non working women is 7.66. The mean difference is found to be 0.46, t ratio is 1.27 which is found to be insignificant at .05 level, thus indicating that there is no significant difference between the life time stress experienced between working and non working women. Hence, the hypothesis regarding life stress mean significant differences between working and non-working is proved. There is no significant difference between the life stress mean scores of working and non working women. No matter the women are working or non-working every women experiences life stress in their lives and they face them. The method of handling may be different but management of stress was not taken into

account in this research. May be they might have influenced indirectly the other variables i.e. health and depression. Teaching is a profession in which majority of women are employed and it is a demanding job. The effectiveness of the educational system largely depends on active, resourceful and competent teachers. The teachers carryout this role of molding the life of children effectively, but at the same time face stress as they are dealing with young children who are difficult to handle. The sources of stress for the school teachers are heavy workload, delayed salaries, duties other than teaching, lack of co-operation from head and colleagues, political interference, student's misbehavior and negative community attitude (Gmelch, 1983) ^[6].

Table 3: Showing means S.D., mean difference, SEMD, t ratio for depression scores of working and nonworking women.

S. No.	Working/ Nonworking	Mean	S.D.	Mean Difference	SEMD	t ratio	Level of Significance
1.	Working women N=200	177.86	5.01	3.56	0.47	7.57	Significant at .01 level
2.	Nonworking women N=200	181.42	4.78				



Graph 3: Showing the means of depression scores of working and nonworking women.

A close perusal of Table 3 shows that the mean score obtained by working women for depression is less than that for non working women (See Graph-3). The mean difference is 3.56 and t ratio 7.57, which at df 398 is found to be highly significant. This indicates a significant difference between the two groups for depression.

It was further hypothesized that there would be of significant difference found between depression mean scores of working and non working women. The total depression means score found for working women is 177.86 and for non working in 181.42. The t ratio found is 7.57 which yield a significant value. Hence, the hypothesized prediction is found to be proved and therefore the hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Studies have shown that among 18 to 64 year olds, less than half 13 percent of those who are depressed are working, compared to over three quarters. 76 percent of those who are not depressed. In later years, the difference between the two groups is more extreme. Among people ages 45 to 64, for example only 31 percent of those who are depressed are working, compared to 70 percent of those who are not depressed.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study it can be concluded that the most of the women, no matter working inside the house or outside the house experience life stresses in their life time. Studies have shown that the coping mechanisms and personality differences are found. The working women sometimes do share their experiences with their colleagues and persons whom they confide. The mental stress is relieved and they do not show symptoms of hopelessness as much as nonworking women. This study was limited to working woman who had engaged themselves in teaching profession. Working women who are teachers do not engage themselves now a days in teaching but have to look after the administrative and other academic affairs. They have to engage themselves in various works. The more one is engaged the less time he/she gets for thinking about useless things and enjoys doing work. The result shows that depression is found to be comparatively less in working women in comparison to non working women.

Depression affects most aspects of life including physical health, participation in social activities, satisfaction with life

and paid work. Studies have shown that adults who are depressed are much less physically healthy than adults who are not depressed. Adults who are depressed are less socially active and less satisfied with their life than adults who are not depressed. Adults who are depressed are more likely to be absent from work and experience limitations in the work that they can do, compared to adults who are not depressed. Health was taken into consideration but satisfaction with life and job and participation in social activities and other chronic conditions were not taken into account. Probably this would have added to much worthy findings.

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