



A Study on Parenting Stress and Coping Strategies Adopted Among Working Mothers

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Abstract

Women who work outside the home face increased levels of stress when it comes to the care of their children and the upbringing of their children, which can lead to a decline in the quality of the relationship that exists between the parent and child. This can have a negative impact on both the mental health of the parents and the children as they are growing up. The study is, qualitative in nature, conducted in Chennai city. The stress among the working mothers is measured from selected 300 sample respondents. They are selected using convenient sampling. The working married women having children from the age of 1 to 5 years are considered as sample respondents (the working women will be given maternity leave for one year from the birth of child have been ignored from the study as they are not working). The stress level of the mothers and their coping strategies are observed using the Google forms. The findings of the study shows that the working mothers having more than one children, have studied upto school level and belong to the nuclear family have more stress in their parental role to care their children. The chapter makes a contribution to the body of sociological work on effective coping responses to stress and discrimination. In point of fact, relatively few studies have used the sociological imagination of pregnant and parenting teenagers by not only reporting their lives but also seeking their understanding and attempting to explain their lives in a social context.

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Introduction

In traditional Indian culture, women were often regarded in the same manner as servants or slaves, as though they had the capacity to have their own will or desires. They were obligated to take their husbands' side in all decisions. The loser in a gambling match was compensated with a number of beautiful women. They were compelled to leap alive into their husbands' funeral pyres after their husbands had passed away as a demonstration of their undying love to their spouses. This habit, which was known as "Sati," persisted until the end of the 17th century, when it was finally abolished in spite

of the dismay that it caused among the most prominent religious figures in Hinduism. Even though it was technically prohibited, the practice of "Sati" remained widespread up until the end of the 19th century and is still carried today in some of the more rural regions of India. Women have been struggling for generations to find their place in a world that is mostly male orientated, and the position that women play in society is one that is always being called into question. The economic structure of the period was completely different from what it is now.

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It was generally accepted that the male head of the family was the rightful owner of the family property. Nobody else in the family, whether they were male or female, was allowed to have any claim to their own separate property. Therefore, to the degree that the patriarchal family acknowledged only the male as the head of the family, it did entail that the rights of the woman were restricted. However, before then, economic rights were not seen as being of extremely high significance. Women were subject to a wide range of disadvantages and restrictions under Hindu law, such as The India Women's Conference, which had been established in 1927, had for a significant amount of time been advocating for their removal from office. Equality of status denotes not just equal opportunities but also equal treatment under the law. There is no room for prejudice towards women based on their gender in today's society. The Indian woman is granted the same political rights as the male, as outlined in the country's constitution. Women have the right to vote and may participate in elections. They are eligible for election to either the State Legislature or the Parliament. Today saw a significant number of women join Parliament. There is no discrimination against women in the workplace, whether in the service industry or the professional world. Over the course of the last fifteen years, a significant number of women have joined the workforce in various capacities within the public sector. There are many fields of work that were formerly closed to women, but now they are allowed to participate. It's possible that the only service left for women to join is the military, but so far they haven't. These days, a growing number of women are entering that area, and they have shown that they can do just as well as their male counterparts.

Women in the Workforce

The heightened sensitivity and vulnerability, women are far more prone to the negative effects of stress than males. They are sometimes referred to as the "better half of the world." The fact that female children are not considered as equal members of the family in many cultures, which also shows in the workplace, is one of the numerous anthropological, historical, sociological, and cultural factors that contribute to women's experience of stress. It is believed that over ninety percent of women in this nation have worked for money at some point in their lives or will work for pay at some point in their lives. As a result of the societal and familial pressures they encounter, many women are prevented from

devoting the same amount of time and energy to their careers as their male counterparts, which in turn works as a barrier to their advancement. The issue that women are confronted with is that official human resource policies of "gender neutrality" and enlightened management practices are not always adequate to safeguard women. This is the difficulty that women are confronted with. The customs and institutions of a big community, of which women continue to constitute just a marginal share. However, some businesses have developed unique human resource policies that are geared at assisting working mothers in achieving a healthy work-life balance. Because ongoing research and development results in the advancement of technology, this sector of the economy necessitates a persistent engagement with one's place of employment. Even a short lapse in continuity of work using the technology might cause the person to fall behind in terms of technological advancement. There is no one-size-fits-all solution to dealing with stress; whether or not a particular strategy will be effective relies on a wide variety of elements, such as the needs and limits of the environment in which it is being employed as well as the competence with which it is being implemented. The findings of this research, our brains are simultaneously engaged in two distinct processes: the first involves "understanding the joke," while the second involves experiencing laughter. The research investigation has focused on The term "stress experience coping" refers to the cognitive and behavioral attempts that are made to master, endure, or decrease the effects of both internal and external demands as well as the conflicts that arise between them. The term "coping" refers to at least two separate concepts: coping resources and coping tactics. In a larger sense, "coping" incorporates both of these. People have varied amounts of personal goods and social assets, which are referred to as "resources," while "strategies" relate to habitual, behavioral, and cognitive style in solving an issue. Some authors have made a distinction between problem-focused coping strategies and emotion-focused strategies, categorizing the former as "problems focused coping strategies" and the latter as "emotion focused strategies." This distinction is based on the authors' approach to coping with problems, which involves avoiding problems. It is becoming more widely understood that the state of one's health is not merely a result of the existence or absence of stress; rather, it is the product of one's ability to effectively cope with that stress. This research focuses



primarily on the stress experienced by women that was both chronic and largely beyond their control. These are the two elements that contribute to the negative effects of stress on both mental and physical health. It is believed that almost ninety percent of the women living in this nation had worked or are now working for wages at some point in their life that was in no way commensurate with the efforts that they had put in. There are many advantages to having a job in addition to the financial rewards. These advantages include expanding one's social circle, gaining social respect, and increasing one's chances of achieving one's goals, enhancing one's sense of self-worth, experiencing less depression, and gaining a sense of justice. However, there is a reason why we refer to our jobs as "work."

Methods of Managing Stress and Anxiety

Recent studies have concentrated their attention on coping as a factor that determines one's level of stress. The term "coping" refers to "the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or diminish external and internal demands and conflict among them." Coping may be described as "the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce" In a more general sense, the term "coping" incorporates not one but at least two separate ideas, namely "coping resources" and "coping techniques." The term "resources" refers to the personal material and social advantages that individuals have in variable amounts, while the term "strategies" refers to the habitual, behavioral, and cognitive way in which an individual approaches an issue. A number of writers have drawn a distinction between coping techniques that take either approach and those that try to avoid issues. Some people differentiate between coping tactics that are centered on the situation at hand and those that are focused on the emotions involved. The method of coping involves many different aspects. During a stressful encounter, both the challenges that are presented by the environment and the coping techniques that are used by the person develop in relevant ways. It is becoming more widely understood that the state of one's health is not merely a result of the existence or absence of stress; rather, it is the product of one's ability to effectively cope with that stress. The feeling of being overwhelmed and stressed out by parental responsibilities is very natural. It occurs when the anticipated and real resources that are available to the parents that allow them to succeed in the

position of parent are not sufficient to meet the demands of parenting. It is something that every single parent, regardless of their educational level, social standing, or financial situation, goes through to some degree. Not only can parental stress hinder child development, but it also has the potential to have a detrimental effect on the health of the parent. The deliberate actions used to alleviate stressful conditions are referred to as coping techniques. When it comes to dealing with the stresses of parenting, various coping techniques are used by different parents. It's possible that they are problem-focused coping methods, in which a person analyses the unpleasant circumstance and then takes active action to fix it. Another strategy to deal with stress is through using emotion-focused coping techniques, which include expressing negative emotions such as rage, inadequacy, or pessimism in reaction to adverse circumstances.

Review of Literature

Higgins et al. (2000) stated that women in career-oriented employment (managers and professionals) and women in earning roles were divided into two groups for the purpose of this empirical study to determine whether or not part-time work helps women achieve a healthy work-family balance (technical, clerical, administrative, retail and production). A random sample of all of the workers of the Canadian federal public sector who work in the national capital area as well as a cross section of employees from the private sector were chosen for this study. The final research sample included 712 moms who were employed in part-time earning jobs and 117 mothers who were employed in part-time carrier roles. In this study, the researchers concentrate on the psychological experience of striking a balance between work and family life, as well as participants' perceptions of their capacity to handle both personal and family responsibilities. The findings of the research showed that having part-time employment was substantially connected with role overload among earners, while for professional women, there was no correlation between job status and role overload. When compared to employees in career roles, individuals in earning occupations reported much greater levels of negative mood and significantly worse levels of overall life satisfaction. There was a correlation between working part time and having a more fulfilled life. There was no correlation between the kind or status of the work and the amount of perceived stress. Women in earning positions



reported much greater rates of depression in comparison to professional women, in addition to significantly lower levels of overall life satisfaction. Stress was independent to either the kind of employment or the status of the position; thus, firms that employed substantial sizes of non-carrier women could also have a role to play in enhancing the quality of work life for their workers. According to the findings of the study of individual outcomes, working in an earner employment was related with greater levels of sad mood and poorer levels of life satisfaction than career work, despite the fact that earner job might be either full or part time. The findings of this study clearly show that the kind of employment affects women in a different way than it does males in their capacity to combine work and family responsibilities

Scope of the Study

This study includes all of the female workers. There is no distinction made with respect to family life cycle, age, education level, income level, or vocation when it comes to the prominent software firms that are located in the city of Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu. The scope of the research was restricted to particular behavioral factors, such as the sharing of family and private matters, the personal sentiments, the stress caused by economic concerns, and the ability to strike a healthy balance between work and home life. This research does not look at the involvement of family members in decision making or any of the other behavioral characteristics that may be relevant. Anyhow, the role of the employers has been analyzed through the perspectives of the women employees in this study. This is necessary despite the fact that the primary focus of this research is on the causes of stress among working women and its impact on the economic issues, with a particular reference to software companies in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Need for the study

It may also be challenging for women who stay at home with their children full time and are also caregivers for their homes. It is a common misconception that women who do not have paid employment lead carefree lives, but the reality is that even stay-at-home mothers have busy schedules that are on par with those of working mothers. The stress of parenting may be mitigated by a number of different things, including social support, a range of stressful life events, health

difficulties in the kid, or the conduct of the child. The degree of stress that moms experience may vary greatly due to the myriad of ways in which children might present themselves. The presence of stress in parenting is mostly attributable to the outcomes of these kid qualities and parental features, including significant life events that have occurred in the parent's life, such as the mother's job. Increased levels of parental stress not only have a negative impact on the mother's health but also result in a decreased level of parental sensitivity towards their children, worse child behaviour and development, and an overall decline in the quality of the relationship between the parents and their children. In light of this, there is an urgent need for the development of a research on the effect of stress among women in general, and in particular among working women, in order to identify the issues and find a solution to overcome this problem. The Indian woman is now joining all domains of public life, whether it be in the legislature or in the municipalities, whether it be in service or in the professions, whether it be in industry or in commerce. The participation of women in public life is having a significant influence, which is contributing to the radical transformation that society is experiencing. After a long period of repression, Indian women have found their way forward. They are now calculating the rate at which the nation will develop socially to the next level. This research is aimed to concentrate on the economic causes of stress among working women, with a particular reference to software businesses in Chennai. This is due to the fact that the role of women has extended throughout the whole of the population at all levels. 2204

Objectives

- The objectives of the study are
- To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents
- To study the parenting stress among working mother
- To analyze the coping strategies adopted by the working mother to manage the stress

Methodology

The study is, qualitative in nature, conducted in Chennai city. The stress among the working mothers is measured from selected 300 sample respondents. They are selected using convenient sampling. The working married women having children from the



age of 1 to 5 years are considered as sample respondents (the working women will be given maternity leave for one year from the birth of child have been ignored from the study as they are not working). The stress level of the mothers and their coping strategies are observed using the Google forms.

Findings

The Socio-economic characteristics of the sample respondents
 The selected working mothers’ natural conditions will influence on their attitude and behaviour. Their age, number of children, educational qualification, and nature of family and level of income are studied. The result is given below in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics

Socio-economic characteristics		N	Percent
Age group	Less than 30 years	73	24.3
	30 -40 years	157	52.3
	More than 40 years	70	23.3
Number of children	One	199	66.3
	More than one	101	33.7
Education	School	17	5.7
	Graduation	147	49.0
	Post graduation	80	26.7
	Others	56	18.7
Nature of family	Joint family	107	35.7
	Nuclear family	193	64.3
Income level	Low	105	35.0
	Middle	149	49.7
	High	46	15.3
Total		300	100.0

The table shows that 73 respondents are less than 30 years old, 157 are aged from 30 to 40 years and 70 respondents are aged more than 40 years. Out 300 sample respondents, 199 (66.3%) respondents have one child and 101 (33.7%) have two or more number of children. Their educational status shows that 17 (5.7%) respondents have studied upto school level, 147 (49.0%) are graduates, 80 (26.7%) are post graduates and 56 (18.7%) respondents are from other categories. Nature of the family is also an important factor to influence the mother’s role in children care and support. This study includes 107 (35.7%) respondents from the joint family and 193 (64.3%) from nuclear family. Their income level shows that 105 (35.0%) respondents are from low income family (annual income less than Rs. 5 lakhs), 149 (49.7%) from middle income family (from Rs.5

lakhs to 10 lakhs) and 46 (15.3%) respondents are belong to the high income group.

Parenting stress

The parenting stress of the working women is measured in various aspects. The work pressure, commitment, working environment, lack of family support, family issues, misunderstanding from the spouse and other family members, lack of guidance and support from the superior, level formalities, poor work life balance to care the children are some of the statements used to measure the stress among the working others related to the parental issues. The level of stress may be observed by the mothers based on their nature. Hence, the relationship between the stress and their nature is studied as below.



Table 2: Age and stress of the respondents

Age group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Less than 30 years	73	19.2603	4.85348	0.233	0.793
30 -40 years	157	19.1083	4.87350		
More than 40 years	70	19.5714	4.22749		
Total	300	19.2533	4.71415		

The age denoted their physical condition and ability and psychological maturity. In this regard, the stress score between the different age group shows that the respondents aged more than 40 years have high stress (19.5714) than young and middle age groups. But the difference in the mean is not significant as

per the result of the ANOVA. The calculated F value is 0.233 is less than the table value and p value is 0.793 (>0.05). Hence, it is concluded that the parenting stress of the working mother is not significantly vary according to their age.

Table 3: Number of children and stress of the respondents

No of children	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
One	199	17.8442	4.53948	-7.995	0.000
More than one	101	22.0297	3.72949		
Total	300	19.2533	4.71415		

The Table 3 shows that the stress of the respondents who have more one child is very high (22.0297) than having one child (17.8442). The difference is significantly high. The t value is -7.995 and p value is

0.000. Hence, it is understood from the result that the stress of the working mothers having more than one child is very high.

Table 4: Educational qualification and stress of the respondents

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
School	17	20.8235	3.57483	2.905	0.035
Graduation	147	18.4830	4.95922		
Post graduation	80	20.0625	4.37873		
Others	56	19.6429	4.56241		
Total	300	19.2533	4.71415		

The educational level of the working mother denotes their occupation, maturity, income and social status. The stress of the working mothers who have studied upto to school level (20.8235) and post graduation (20.0625) have high mean of stress than

other categories. The difference is also found significant at 5% level. The F value is 2.905 and p value is 0.035. It reveals that the stress of the mothers studied upto school level or post graduation is higher than other category of mothers.

Table 5: Nature of family and stress of the respondents

Nature of family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig.
Joint family	107	18.3458	5.32191	-2.505	0.013
Nuclear family	193	19.7565	4.27295		
Total	300	19.2533	4.71415		

The nature of the family i.e., joint family and nuclear family helps the mothers in child care. The stress level of the mothers in the nuclear family (19.7565) is higher than the stress level of the joint family

(18.3458). The t value (-2.505) is significant at 5% (0.013). It is understood from the result that the working mothers from the joint family get support from other family members. The mothers in the



nuclear family have some additional stress to care their children.

Table 6: Income level and stress of the respondents

Level of income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig.
Low	105	18.7619	5.05265	1.354	0.260
Middle	149	19.3356	4.68409		
High	46	20.1087	3.89432		
Total	300	19.2533	4.71415		

The stress level of the high income family respondents is more (20.1087) than low and middle income family respondents. But the result of the ANOVA indicates that the difference in the stress level among the different working mothers based on their income does not vary significantly.

The findings of the study shows that the working mothers having more than one children, have studied upto school level and belong to the nuclear family have more stress in their parental role to care their children

Coping strategies

The role of mother is a gift of god. Their role in developing the family and the career of the children is very important. They never fail to do their role as a mother apart from their profession. The working women may adopt different strategies to manage their stress. In this background, their coping strategies are studied. They are discussed as below.

Table 7: Coping strategies of working mothers

Strategies	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Rank
Positive attitude	3.48	1.297	6.19	I
Denial	3.26	1.159	5.57	V
Mental disengagement	3.49	1.372	6.17	II
Make use of others' support	3.39	1.184	5.93	IV
Religious or meditation	3.21	1.112	5.53	VI
Humor	2.83	1.183	4.52	X
Restraint	2.83	1.453	4.82	VIII
Acceptance	2.93	1.179	4.76	IX
Recreational activities	3.18	1.133	5.37	VII
Focus on and venting emotions	3.46	1.157	6.14	III

There are different strategies to manage their stress. During their motherhood, their positive attitude is adopted by the mothers (6.19) which will give a pleasant environment and positive atmosphere in the family. Further, the mental disengagement with the matters related to the stress is also found as most successful strategy (6.17). Avoiding the matters which make them stress is given third rank (6.14). Most of the mothers make use of other family members like husband, parents and in-laws during their period of stress (5.93). This is a team work and building with family members with lovely atmosphere will reduce their stress. Denial mode of mind is another strategy of the working mothers to manage their stress. Religious and other meditation

(5.53), recreational activities (5.37) and restraint their mind (4.82) are other strategies they follow in the coping their parenting stress.

Conclusion

The current research came to the conclusion that both working mothers and women who did not work experienced the stress of being a parent; nevertheless, a greater percentage of working mothers experienced the stress of being a parent. Progressive reinterpretation and development, the mothers' top coping strategies were instrumental social support, active coping, religious coping, emotional and social support and planning. Restraint was the primary method of coping utilised



by working mothers, whereas nonworking mothers tended to focus on and express their feelings, make use of instrumental social support, deny the existence of a problem, turn to religion for comfort, make use of emotional and social support, and suppress their participation in competitive activities as a method of coping. The findings of the study shows that the working mothers having more than one children, have studied upto school level and belong to the nuclear family have more stress in their parental role to care their children. The chapter makes a contribution to the body of sociological work on effective coping responses to stress and discrimination. In point of fact, relatively few studies have used the sociological imagination of pregnant and parenting teenagers by not only reporting their lives but also seeking their understanding and attempting to explain their lives in a social context.

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