

Psycho-Socio Factors Causing Stress amidst Coronavirus Lockdown: A Study among Working Women

Samuel S Mitra¹, Kiran Singh²

¹Staff & Researcher, ²Assistant Professor in Hindi,
^{1,2}St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata, West Bengal, India

ABSTRACT

The mayhem triggered by the boisterous Covid-19 Novel Coronavirus pandemic has sent the world nations into a ramshackle enforcing lockdowns in a measure to curtail the disease. The Coronavirus lockdowns have chained the society bringing a seismic change in attitudes and behaviour of the society. People have been compelled to change their modus vivendi leading to prodigious amount of stress which seems to have perched so much so that they now feel excruciated and eviscerated. In this context, working women in India who usually play multiple roles of wielding both personal and professional life has been exposed to a litmus test. The objective of the present research study is to investigate into the different psycho-socio factors of stress among working women created as a result of the Coronavirus lockdown.

KEYWORDS: Novel Coronavirus; Stress; Psycho-Socio Stress; Lockdown; Working Women

How to cite this paper: Samuel S Mitra | Kiran Singh "Psycho-Socio Factors Causing Stress amidst Coronavirus Lockdown: A Study among Working Women" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-4 | Issue-4, June 2020, pp.541-546,



IJTSRD31051

URL:
www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd31051.pdf

Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



Introduction to the study

The pandemic of Covid-19 Novel Coronavirus has been making headlines every day. The disease was first identified in the Wuhan region of China in late November, 2020 and spread like wildfire to almost all countries. In India, the arrival of Coronavirus sounded like a death knell and soon began extending its evil wings rapidly all over the country. This made the government enforce lockdown since the middle of March, 2020. Amidst this lockdown, several countries have stuttered especially dealing with the deadly virus as well as their economic progress which have been blighted severely. India is no exception. The world's second most populous country which always seems to be in a Brownian motion has turned into a silent valley. People are staying at home, thus adhering to the quarantine measures imposed by the government. This has actually increased stress by an inexorable extent, especially among the working women in India. The archetypal Indian working women have been witnessed to have come a long way in playing numerous roles whether be it managing their personal life or professional life. Their metamorphosis from the traditional homemaker and upbringing children to an exquisitely skilled professional and a source of income is really astounding. Albeit a seismic shift brought in the life trajectory of working women in India, stress experienced by the working women have been only skyrocketed with each passing day. To add to the misery, the torrid impact of the Coronavirus lockdown have further added to their stress. This study is attempted

towards investigating the psycho-social factors among the Indian working women amidst the Coronavirus lockdown.

Background of the study

In the backdrop of this volatile world, fuelled by globalization and urbanization, changes are occurring at a breakneck pace. It is quite breathtaking and overwhelming to think about the changes percolating in a developing country like India but it has also brought with it unwanted stress in the personal and professional lives of the working women. The modus operandi of working women has witnessed a bewildering transformation over the recent years in particularly in India. With the advancements in modernization and new culture and new styles of living have allured the women to undertake a professional career while simultaneously managing their household works. In this light, such women have also been exposed to prodigious stress. Managing both their personal and professional life has been an arduous task and a major conundrum. Concern and responsibilities towards families and a robust commitment towards work is a malaise. However, it is a well-known fact that stress does not only stem out from personal or professional activities only. Persistent exposure to idle time has also been told to be a major source of stress. Talking in this light, we have taken the example of the ongoing Coronavirus lockdown and the Psycho-Social stress stemming from it. In this endeavor, we shall investigate the

dominant psycho-socio factors of stress by conducting a survey on Indian working women

Psycho-Socio Stress and Working women

Psycho-socio stress is the consequence of a cognitive appraisal of what is at stake and what can be done to cope up with it. It is a combination of psychological stress and social stress. Psychological stress can be defined as "in-equilibrium between demands placed on a person and his/her ability to manage it" while social stress can be defined as the "stress that stems out from one's relationship with others and from the social environment in general." Social factors include general factors of the society consisting of social structure and social processes that impinge on the individual. Psychological factors include individual-level processes and meanings that influence mental states. In fact the relationship between psychological factors and the physical body can be influenced by social factors itself, the effects of which are mediated through psychological understanding. Few examples of psychosocial factors are social support, loneliness, marital status, social disruption, bereavement, work environment, social status, and social integration.

Traditionally Indian women have been synonymous with the word 'Homemaker' but in the recent years the trend has reversed. The ever increasing cut-throat competition, cost of living, advancement in technology, myriad scope for fulfilling one's ambitions in the domain of professionalism, etc. are some of the key reasons that have been a nifty driving force of attracting women of the present society to undertake a professional career. Indian women are now not only experts in managing their house but also playing a pivotal role in the ambit of profession as myriad women are found engaged across a plethora of professions in educational institutions, technical institutions, hospitals, IT sectors, etc. However, it is a no-brainer that managing both personal and professional life is a herculean task causing humungous amount of stress. Stress has become a global phenomenon which has received considerable attention in the recent years. Stress may be defined as the "adaptive response of a person stemming from that person's interaction with the environment as witnessed by certain changes within that person deviating from the person's usual demeanour." Stress is actually a person's reaction to the situation and not the situation. Stress is not always negative as it may also be positive or neutral. Positive Stress is known as 'Eustress', Neutral Stress is known as 'Neustress' and Negative Stress is known as 'Distress.' However, it is not only the Physical Stress that people might be exposed to. Mental Stress is also a form of stress that can pummel the people.

According to reports working women have been exposed to gargantuan stress not only at home because of managing family, upbringing children, personal conflicts with family members or relatives or friends but also experiences paramount stress at the work place as a result of gender biasness, sexual harassment, wage pay variance, safety measures and many more. The stress response comes with stress which affects the physical and mental states of a person. The bane of stress is that it brings with it menacing illness and diseases affecting person with varying degrees. Striking a crux balance between personal life and professional career among working women has become a major focus for research due to the physical, psychological and social imbalances that has crept in and is always on the

rise, thus affecting the modus vivendi of working women. Taking all these things into consideration, we have noticed that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has left everyone reeling across the globe and the working women are no exception. Novel Coronavirus is taking a toll on the lives of working women affecting them both psychologically as well as socially. While the Coronavirus lockdown continues to jettison working women from social gatherings, meet-ups and other outdoor activities it is also affecting them psychologically in several ways such as boredom, fatigue, fear, etc. Talking in this light, the current research paper is an endeavor to anatomize certain factors of psycho-socio stress that are being experienced by working women in these Coronavirus lockdown days.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify the different factors of psycho-socio stress among Indian working women in the times of Coronavirus lockdown
2. To identify the most dominant factors of psycho-socio stress among working women in lockdown times by the use of Factor Analysis with the help of Principal Component Analysis
3. To create an awareness among working women regarding psycho-socio stress and recommend valuable ways of managing such stress

Literature Review

The concept of Stress was first introduced by Selye Hans in 1936 which meant physical hardship and pain. She defined Stress as "non-specific response of a body to the demands placed on it."

Cooper & Marshall (1976) found that "professionals who were involved in interacting with more people were furthermore exposed to work related stress in comparison to those who worked in the organization."

According to Repetti et al. (1989) "women who do not get support from household management experiences high levels of stress."

In the words of Khetarpal & Kochar (2006) "poor peer relations, intrinsic hardship and under participation are the major contributors of stress affecting majority of women." According to Abirami (2011), "the stress factors among working women are low working standards, low financial benefits and stress due to lack of safety and security."

Rajasekhar and Sasikala (2013) in their study found that working women face stress largely because of family responsibilities, job insecurity and demand for greater efficiency.

Bhuvaneshwari (2013) revealed that stress in married working women is due to disequilibrium in work life balance, family and official commitments, work place agitations and long working hours.

Yan, H., & Xie S. (2016) in their study has defined work stress as "a series of physiological, psychological and behavioural responses due to the relentless effects of one or more stressors on individuals in an organization."

Albeit there are a huge number of studies which have been done on stress but there are only few studies which have

been previously conducted focusing on psycho-socio stress. Taking this into consideration, we find it extremely arduous to come across research studies which have focused on psycho-socio stress among working women from the viewpoint of Coronavirus lockdown.

Data and Methodology

For the purpose of primary data collection an anonymous survey was conducted among 150 working women between the age group of 22 to 51 of different income groups from different professions. All the target respondents in this study are obviously working women from the cities of Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata, thus roughly covering three major states of India which are Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and West Bengal. For the purpose of collection of data, a questionnaire was developed. All the questionnaires were mailed. The questionnaire is moderately long consisting of 24 questions which emphasize on the psychological and social factors of stress during quarantines only. All the questions included in the questionnaire were MCQ type. Almost all the questions were self-framed albeit some few questions have been adopted from previous research studies relating to stress. There were exactly 40 questionnaires which were either improperly filled or not filled at all. Thus, our final valid responses stood at 110.

This study is also based on some secondary data collection to make a solid foundation of concepts and theories. Authentic reliable database have been accessed to gain some exquisite information for the foundation of theories in the present research study. E-resources like INFLIBNET, DOAJ, J-Stor, BASE, etc. have also been accessed providing valuable inputs needed for the present research.

For the purpose of data processing, IBM's SPSS 23.0 has been used. It is a very special software package for data analysis which is predominantly used in Social Sciences.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Profiling

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
22-27	10	9.10	9.10
28-33	44	40.00	49.10
34-39	35	31.82	80.92
40-45	16	14.54	95.46
46-51	5	4.54	100.00
Total	110	100.0	

Table 1: Frequency Statistics for Age Classification

From the above table we observe the frequency distribution for women of various age. We see that maximum number of respondents in this research study comprises of a very young age group (28-33) followed by another age group who are still young (34-39).

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
Entrepreneurs	15	13.63	13.63
Teachers	34	30.90	44.53
IT Professionals	30	27.30	71.83
Nurses	5	4.54	76.37
Others	26	23.63	100.00
Total	110	100.0	

Table2: Frequency Statistics for Occupation Classification

The above table shows us that maximum number of respondents in the research study belongs to teaching profession followed by another group of respondents who are IT Professionals who closely match the number of teacher respondents. The category of Others include those working women who comprises of doctors, engineers, dance coaches, fitness experts, counsellors and lawyers. This category of respondents accounts for 23.63% of the responses collected.

	Frequency	Valid %	Cumulative %
Below 10000	8	7.27	7.27
10001-25000	37	33.63	40.90
25001-50000	32	29.09	69.99
50001-100000	19	17.28	87.27
Above 100000	14	12.73	100.00
Total	110	100.0	

Table 3: Frequency Statistics for Income Classification

From the above table we observe that most of respondents in the present research study have moderate income level in the range 10001-25000 followed by another group of respondents who have a higher income juxtaposed to the former falling in the range 25001-50000. These two income groups accounts for 33.63% and 29.09% of the total respondents.

Since, the objective of the study is to prune out the various factors of psycho-socio stress among working women in times of Coronavirus lockdown, a factor analysis has been conducted to find out the most dominant factors of psycho-socio factors.

KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has been conducted to check if the sample size is adequate and also explains whether it is worthwhile to conduct a Factor Analysis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.786
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	839.420
	df	24
	Sig.	.000

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

The results of the KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirms it is worthwhile to conduct a Factor Analysis on the variables of psycho-socio stress. Ideally the value should be greater than 0.6, in this case, we observe that the KMO Test Statistic is 0.786. We also observe that the Significance is at 5% level, showing p=0.000 which is lesser than 0.05 (the acceptable limit). Hence, it is worthwhile to run a Factor Analysis.

Total Variance Explained1

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.214	46.820	46.820	3.105	34.500	34.500
2	1.100	12.220	59.040	2.319	25.766	60.026
3	0.876	9.733	68.733			
4	0.749	8.322	77.095			
5	0.610	6.777	83.872			
6	0.531	5.900	89.772			
7	0.407	4.522	94.324			
8	0.321	3.566	97.890			
9	0.192	2.110	100.000			

Table 5: Factor Analysis (Total Variance Explained)

The above table shows us Factor Analysis conducted obtaining a TVE (Total Variance Explained). According to the TVE, results highlight the number of factors obtained with the condition that their Eigen values are greater than 1 (Eigen value > 1). It is proved by the Component 1 and Component 2 accounting for and of the total variance explained respectively. Principal Component Analysis helped to extract the variables according to the requisite of the Eigen values are greater than 1 (Eigen values < 1).

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
Frustration	0.728	0.156
Job Security	0.749	0.178
Financial Security	0.547	0.319
Emotional drain	0.595	0.371
Lack of self-esteem	0.497	0.492
Extreme alertness at workplace	0.593	0.470
Lack of leisure activities	0.272	0.735
Relationship with family members	0.432	0.618
Lack of outdoor activities	0.816	0.168
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. ^a		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Table 6: Factor Analysis (Rotated Component Matrix)

Above is the table showing the Rotated Component Matrix according to which the variables will get accommodated in the factor loadings, thereby showing the final results.

The component may be arranged in the following manner:

Component I	Component II
Frustration	Lack of leisure activities
Job Security	Relationship with family members
Financial Security	Lack of outdoor activities
Emotional drain	
Lack of self-esteem	
Extreme alertness at workplace	

Table 7: Arrangements of components

The 9 variables are disintegrated into 2 factors which we have renamed as Component I and Component II. Component I has been renamed as Psychological Stress and Component II as Social Stress

We have further run a test statistic called Cronbach’s Alpha to check whether all questions or variables in the questionnaire fit adequately or not. The table below shows the reliability statistics for the variables.

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha based on Standardized Items	N of items
0.756	0.756	24

Table 8: Reliability Statistics for All Variables (n=24)

The standardized Cronbach’s Alpha value is 0.756, which is acceptable value, thereby proving that all the questions/variables perfectly fit in the questionnaire.

Findings & Discussions

It has been found that working women have been significantly affected both in terms of psychological stress and social stress. The key dominant factors of psycho-socio stress which have been identified in the present research are frustration, job security, financial security, emotional drain, lack of self-esteem, extreme alertness at workplace, lack of leisure activities, relationship with family members and lack of outdoor activities. It should be noted that the variable of extreme alertness at workplace is not applicable for all except some working women like doctors, nurses and police whose services are absolutely ineluctable in these lockdown days and have been well appreciated gaining a lot of plaudits.

1. One of the striking revelations of the present research study has been job insecurity experienced among working women. During these quarantines we have witnessed most of the countries bearing the ignominy for wide scale unemployment. Due to lengthy lockdown imposed as an attempt to curtail the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, many working women have been victims of urban unemployment or about to be such victims. Thus, job insecurity has been one of the key psycho-socio factors of stress among working women during these lockdown days.
2. Financial security has been a common malaise during the lockdown. People from all spheres of occupation have been left scratching their head as to concerns regarding finance just kept on escalating. Due to lockdown, manufacturing and retailing, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls, theatres, institutions, social hubs, etc. were all closed which created a major headache for the women working in these sectors and thus blighted their source of income.
3. Emotional drain is another crux factor for psycho-socio stress among working women. It can be said that frustration, lack of self-esteem and emotional drain are interrelated. During these lockdown people (working women in this study) have been compelled to chain themselves which have led to boredom, frustration, fatigue and thus an emotional drain. Working women have also experienced a significant dip in their self-esteem hence adding to the misery.
4. Truth to be told, almost all sectors have been temporarily suspended during these lockdown except certain key grocery stores, medicine shops, hospitals and nursing homes. Women rendering their precious services in these sectors have actually experienced more stress than ever before due to extreme alertness. Precautions like wearing masks, frequent washing of hands, using sanitizers, keeping a physical distance while dealing with others, etc. have proven to be a major source of psycho-socio stress among working women.
5. Lack of or no leisure activities have also been a worry for the working women in these lockdown days. Leisure is a recreational activity providing us with enjoyment which is an essential element of human biology and psychology. Leisure activities particularly like cycling, walking, group trips, etc. which have been widely practiced by working women all across the globe had to be sacrificed as a result of the lockdown which have increased stress among working women.
6. In these days of lockdown, the relationship between working women and family members have taken a new trajectory full of warmth and companionship. In fact

most of the working women have enjoyed a good time with family members with most of them having no work or very little work barring certain exceptions as discussed earlier. However, relationship with family members has also been identified as a key psycho-socio stress due to added responsibilities in domestic works, miff with family members, etc.

7. There are many working women who do not indulge in leisure activities but do a lot of outdoor activities like shopping, taking kids to school, visiting marketplaces, kitty parties, social circles, etc. which is actually a kind of recreation to them. As a result of the lockdown, there only source of recreation has also been snatched from them leaving them ruffled. This particular factor is also a significant variable of psycho-socio stress according to the present research study. Just a little earlier, we have discussed about lack of leisure activities leading to psycho-socio stress among working women during lockdown. The main reason behind including outdoor activities as a different variable that from leisure activities is that outdoor activities may be a type of leisure but leisure activities cannot be always outdoor.

Significance of the study

1. This research study is vital as it probes into the psycho-socio factors of stress among working women from different domains of profession amidst Coronavirus lockdown
2. This research creates a general awareness for stress albeit on a short note but nevertheless enough for the readers to understand stress
3. This research study is aimed at not only scrutinizing the psycho-socio factors of stress but also provide valuable ways of coping up with stress thus helping the working women wield their hectic modus operandi
4. This research study is innovative in the sense that it investigates the factors of psycho-socio stress among working women in these times of lockdown, which makes it very unique

Limitations of the study

1. The respondents (working women) in this study were limited to 110 only. More samples would have given us a clearer picture
2. This study though primarily focuses on India, the samples comprise of respondents from Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata
3. Some of the factors of psycho-socio stress mentioned in this study may not be a source of psycho-socio stress for many in practical life

Managerial Implications

Truth to be told, stress cannot be avoided. It is inevitable in today's preponderant hyper-competitive era. Even if a person does not do anything, he/she is still bound to experience stress as we have observed in this research study. Stress albeit inevitable is still manageable. Experts of stress management have deliberated a wide array of techniques for the efficient management of stress. Especially talking about psycho-socio stress that too among working women, we all know managing it is a herculean task. Nevertheless, it is not indefatigable and thus can be wielded. Meditation has been long recognized as an effective way of managing and coping up with it. In fact, tracing back to the Ancient Period of history we have studied how the people

used to meditate in order to unshackle themselves from the stranglehold of stress and rejuvenate their mind and body. Yoga and physical exercises are also a very popular way of managing stress as these are a type of recreation which rejuvenates the mind and body. Creating a general awareness through a host of programs in yoga and physical exercises have gained massive popularity among youths as well as aged people. Counselling is another way of managing stress. Counselling has become imperative particularly in several educational institutions, where students as well as teachers avail the counselling services in order to relax their mind and feel stress free. Counsellors through their precious service helps in creating customized remedial measures based on the requirement of each individual. Socializing is also a great way of releasing stress. Friends, peers, group circle, etc. all acts as a stress buster. In this research study, we have observed how the lack of outdoor activities like kitty parties, social circles, etc. during lockdown have significantly contributed to stress. Proper social activities bring external support to internal well-being. Music therapy is also another nifty technique of releasing stress. Listening to mind relaxes the mind which has been scientifically proven as listening to music reduces levels of cortisol in the body. Cortisol is a hormone which contributes to feelings of stress.

Conclusion

In today's modern society, where competition is increasing with each passing day, the modus vivendi of the people especially women have undergone wholesome metamorphosis. The evolution of women from an archetypal traditional homemaker to an astounding professional has been quite a turnaround. Nowadays women from all religion, caste, race, etc. have a robust proclivity towards a nifty career which have made them flock into various profession coupled with managing their houses simultaneously. This has resulted in gargantuan stress among working women especially physical and psychological stress. This research study is an endeavour to study something very unique and different. Therefore we have focused on the psycho-socio stress factors among working women that too during these days of lockdown. The present research study will definitely add value to existing empirical research studies which have been conducted in the domain of stress. As relentless changes are consistently percolating in the lives of working women, managing house and work simultaneously has become a major conundrum. Stress has become inevitable and managing stress has become all the more imperative.

Therefore it is very important to maintain an equilibrium between domestic work and professional work. Truth to be told, stress cannot be completely eliminated from the lives of the people but the effects of stress can be significantly reduced through proper stress management as discussed.

References

- [1] Jain G, Tyagi H. K. and Kumar A. (2015). Psycho-Social Factors Causing Stress: A Study of Teacher Educators. *Journal of Education and Practice*, Vol. 6, No.4.
- [2] Mathew S. C. (2018). Psycho-Social Issues of Middle Aged Working Women in Cochin City Based on Stress. *Journal of Advances and Scholarly Researches in Allied Education*, Volume 15, Issue No. 6
- [3] Muntazir M., Neharshi S., Manju P. (2014). A comparative study of mental health among working women and house wives. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*.
- [4] Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*. New York: Springer.
- [5] Dr. Rajasekhar and B. Sasikala. (2013). An impact of stress management on employed women. *Language in India*, Vol. 13, No 4.
- [6] Dr. M. Dhanabhakyaam and J. Malarvizhi. (2014). Work-Family Conflict and Work Stress among Married Working Women in Public and Private Sector Organizations. *International Research Journal of Business and Management*, Vol. 7, No.10.
- [7] Denton, M., Prus, S., & Walters, V. (2004). Gender differences in health: a Canadian study of the psychosocial, structural and behavioural determinants of health. *Social Science & Medicine*.
- [8] Bakshi, R., Sudha, N., and Sandhu, P. (2008). Impact of Occupational Stress on Home Environment: An Analytical Study of Working Women of Ludhiana City. *Journal of Human Ecology*, Vol. 23, No. 2.
- [9] Bhuvaneshwari, M. (2013). A Case Study on Psychological and Physical Stress Undergone by Married Working Women. *Journal of Business and Management*, Vol.14 No. 6
- [10] Burman R and Goswami T. G. (2018). A Systematic Literature Review of Work Stress. *International Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (9).