



## STRESS MANAGEMENT THROUGH DIET FOR WORKING WOMEN

**Dr. Susmita S. Durgule**

**Associated Professor in Home Science,  
Smt. C. B. Shah Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Sangli, Maharashtra.**

### ABSTRACT

*One of the growing problems of working women in India is stress due to over work. Women has to carry out house hold work such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, bill paying, child caring, elder care along with many other responsibilities. The responsibility is more when a woman is an employee. Stress is common to women because women are involved in both household and service activities. Occupational stress is a growing problem in workplaces and may be a problem of particular magnitude for working women, in part because of gender-specific job stressors (gender discrimination and difficulties combining work and family). Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's' lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key factor in personal and family issue for many societies. There are many facets in working mothers' lives that subject to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis. Imbalance between work and family life arises due to a number of factors. Various factors appear to strengthen the brunt of pressure on women. Stress management can be a powerful tool for wellness, but too much stress adversely affects physical health. There are many strategies, such as deep breathing, meditation, rhythmic exercise, and yoga. Fitting these activities into daily routine life can help reduce everyday stress and boost energy and mood.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Stress, working women, Stress management.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:-

One of the growing problems of working women in India is stress due to over work. Stress is common to women because women are involved in both household and service activities. Women has to carry out house hold work such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, bill paying, child caring, elder care along with many other responsibilities. The responsibility is more when a woman is an employee. Employment has many benefits for women including increased financial resource. Occupational stress is a growing problem in workplaces and may be a problem of particular magnitude for working women, in part because of gender-specific job stressors (gender discrimination and difficulties combining work and family). Occupational stress commonly include job for task demands (over-workload), poor interpersonal relation, unfair management practices, noisy atmosphere, another stress relates with economical factors, conflicts between employers and employee as well as conflicts in work and family roles.

Men and women are exposed to many of the same stressors. However, women may be more sensitive to interpersonal conflict whereas men might be more sensitive to things that waste time and effort. Furthermore, although men and women might not differ in overall strains, women are more likely to experience psychological distress, whereas men experience more physical strain. Combining

housework, childcare, shopping and cooking with an outside job and trying to do everything on time is one of the biggest factors of women being more stressed at work, characterized mainly by feelings of guilt and hostility.

According to the current World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of occupational or work-related stress "is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope." (www.VWA.vic.gov.au) Another definition of stress is Physical or psychological disorder associated with an occupational, environment and manifested in symptoms such as extreme anxiety, or tension, or cramps, headaches, or digestion problems."

The human body has a natural chemical response to a threat or demand, commonly known as the "flight or fight" reaction, which includes the release of adrenalin. Once the threat or demand is over the body can return to its natural state. Acute, or short-term, stress causes an immediate reaction in the body. If the threat or demand passes quickly, the body generally returns to normal. However, with prolonged stress, many health problems can develop.

#### **Some of the early symptoms of stress-related problems include:**

**Physical Symptoms:** Headaches, Stomach problems, Eating disorders, Sleep disturbances, Fatigue, Muscle aches & pains, chronic mild illnesses.

**Psychological & Behavioral:** Anxiety, Irritability, Low morale depression, Alcohol & drug use, Feeling powerless, Isolation from co-workers.

#### **A longer stress period of time, chronic health problems are such as:**

**Physical Conditions:** High Blood Pressure, Heart disease, Stroke, Spastic colon, Immune system dysfunction, Diabetes, Asthma, Muscular & skeletal disorders, Peptic Ulcer, and even Cancer.

**Psychological & Behavioral Problems:** Serious depression, Suicidal behavior, Domestic violence, Alcohol abuse, Substance abuse, Burnout.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:-**

The objectives of the study are:

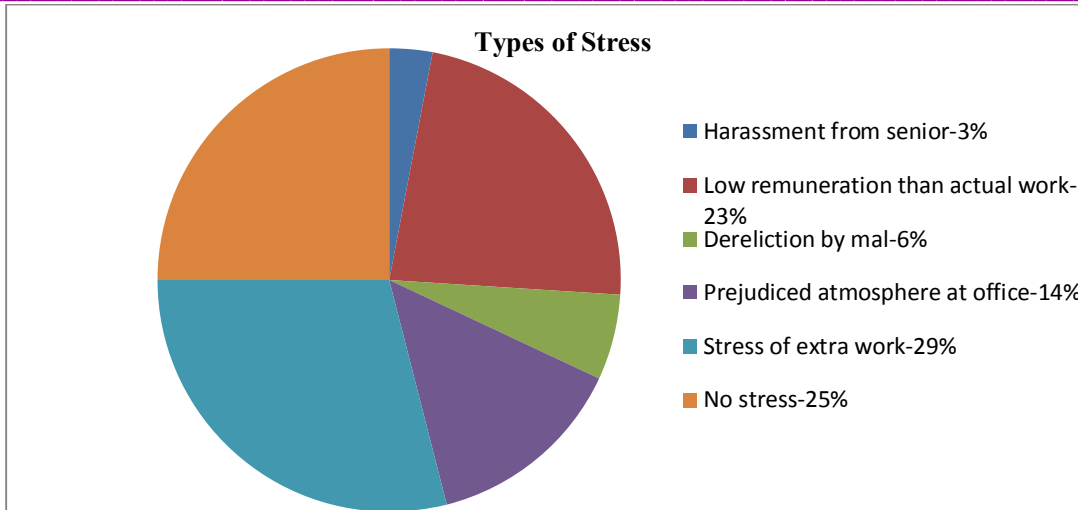
- i) To know the reasons of stress among working women.
- ii) To understand the attitude of women towards the stress management.
- iii) To create awareness about stress and suggest remedies on stress through diet.

## **3. RESEACRCH METHODOLOGY:-**

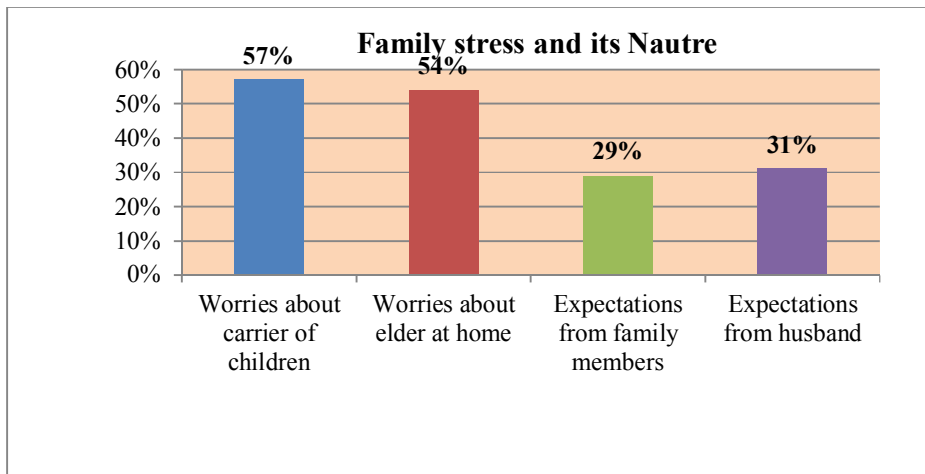
For the present study, 'Survey Method' is adopted as a research method. A Survey of 35 working women (belonging to middle income family) from different work places is considered by the researcher. The sample consists of 35 working women at different posts in both government and non government sector viz- clerk, teaching professional, nurses, sales girls, counselors etc. These women works in their jobs for 6-8 hours per day and also spent 6-8 hours in household activities. These women works in both the field's i. e. service and family and each of them have at least 4-5 family members. The age group of these women is 35 to 45 years. For data collection a questionnaire was prepared and it was distributed to 35 working women in different work fields.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISSCUTION:-**

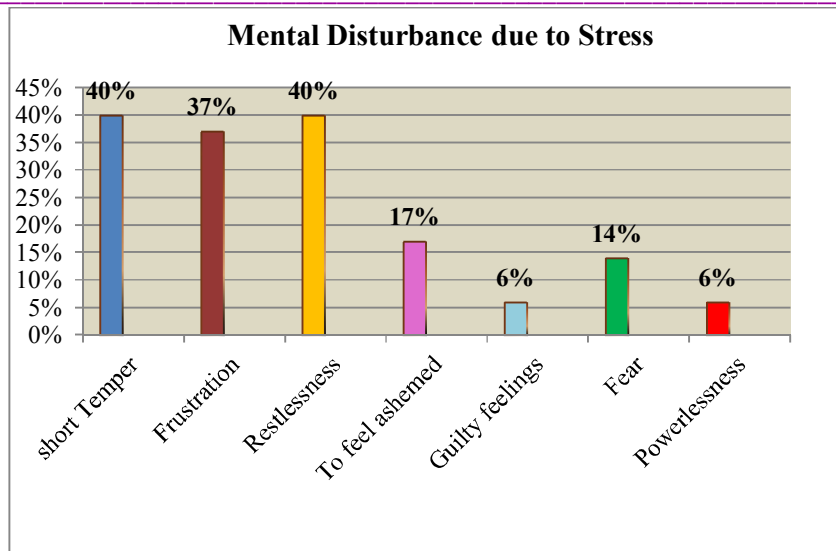
- 1) 75% of working women feeling stress. It is found that women working at lower positions like clerk, nurses, sales girls etc. have more stress .It are also found that there is more stress in non government sector as compared to government sector.
- 2) Some type of stress like harassment from senior, low remuneration than actual work, dereliction by male, prejudiced atmosphere at office and stress of extra work was facing by working women. It is found that extra work load and low remuneration than actual work is the main cause behind the stress among working women at both sectors. Other types of stress at working place relates with prejudiced atmosphere at office dereliction by male and harassment from seniors.



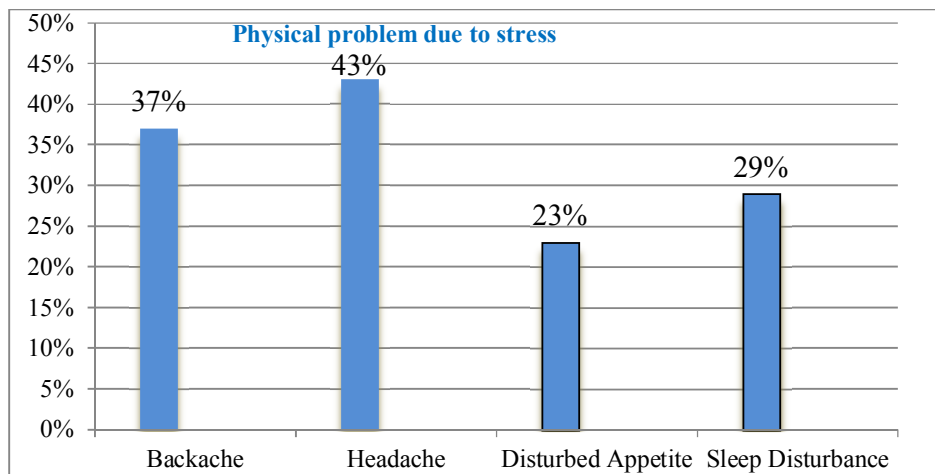
3) It is found that women who are in teaching field are more worried about carrier of children and care about elders at home. It is a major cause of stress among working women. Specially working women on the designation of a clerk and a teacher experience more stress about it. Apart from all these, she has to fulfill expectations of work from husband and other family members which puts more stress on women.



4) Mental disturbance like frustration, weakness, fear, guilty feeling, feeling of being ashamed, short temper are common problems due to stress. It is found that short temper, feeling of being ashamed and frustration are the three major problems of working women in non government sector compared to that of working women in government sector . But the fear and guilt is more experienced by working women in government job. The problem of powerlessness and restlessness is same in both sectors.



5) The following table shows that working women face the physical problems due to stress. The analysis shows that headache and backache problems are more in non government job holders. The problem of disturbed apatite is same in both sector services. Women who are working in government job sector face the problem of sleep disturbance more than non government job sector.



- 6) It is found that some working women manage their stress by yoga, joining laughing club, spending their time with pet animals and by completing their hobbies. Watching T. V. and movies and listening music is preferred more by working women of both sectors.
- 7) It is observed that working women are busy in various tasks like household work, in the job and fulfill the family responsibilities. She has no time to take herself care and remain healthy. Also it is found that these women have not any information about balanced diet and its relationship with health. It means that she has ignorance about health and nutrition.

**5. SUGGETIONS:-**

Stress not only affects our choice of food but also how fast we eat and the frequency of meals and snacks. That's because stress can refuel the body's appetite by releasing the hormone cortisol (a stress hormone). There is no doubt that stress can cause a vicious circle of eating that can wreak havoc on our weight-loss efforts. Proper nutrition promotes health, well-being, and rejuvenation, which in

turn enhances our resilience to stress. A number of medical studies have shown that stress can deplete important nutrients -- particularly the B complex and C vitamins, and sometimes the minerals calcium and magnesium. Because these nutrients are needed to balance the effects of stress hormones like cortisol, and may even play a role in helping us burn fat. A good diet will help taking a high potency multi-vitamin supplement can insure us give our body what it needs to not only deal with the stress, but also burn fat and lose weight.

Stress takes a nutritional toll on our body ranging from depleting vitamins to depressing our immune system. Under conditions of high stress, several nutrients, including vitamins A, C, and the B vitamins, are easily depleted in our system, making us more vulnerable to illness and fatigue. Stress can also disrupt normal bodily functions, particularly the gastrointestinal tract and appetite. Stress management through diet can be a powerful tool for wellness, but too much stress can affect physical health. There are many strategies for stress management and one of them is all about what we eat. Foods can help tame stress in several ways. A healthy diet can counter the impact of stress, by shoring up the immune system and lowering blood pressure. Proper nutrition promotes health, well-being, and rejuvenation, which in turn enhances our resilience to stress.

## **6. Dietary Guidelines:-**

### **6.1 Complex Carbohydrates:-**

All carbohydrates prompt the brain to make more serotonin. For a steady supply of this feel-good chemical, it's best to eat complex carbohydrates, which are digested more slowly. Include 100 to 120 gm complex CHO daily in diet. Good choices include whole-grain cereals, moong and tuvar dal, breads, oatmeal. Complex CHO can also help you feel balanced by stabilizing blood sugar levels. Avoid simple sugars because Simple sugars are digested quickly, leading to a spike in serotonin.

### **6.2 Omega 3 fatty acid:**

Fatty fish contains Omega-3 fatty acids, example fish such as salmon, sardines and tuna, can prevent increasing in stress hormones and may help protect against heart disease, mood disorders like depression. Green leafy vegetables, cabbage, lettuce, soybean are good vegetarian sources of omega-3-fatty acid.

### **6.3 Vitamin C**

Vitamin C rich food like lemon, orange, amla, guava, green leafy vegetables can control the level of stress hormones while strengthening the immune system. It is keep control on blood pressure and cortisol levels returned to normal more quickly. So it is better to took vitamin C rich food before a stressful task.

### **Vitamin E:**

Almonds are chock-full of helpful vitamins. Vitamin E to bolster the immune system, plus B vitamins, which may make us more resilient during bouts of stress such as depression. To get the benefits, snack on a quarter of a cup almond every day. Vegetables, vegetable oils, cereals, poultry, meat and fish are another good sources of vitamin E.

### **6.4 Magnesium**

Deficiency of magnesium cause of headaches and fatigue, and it is compounding with the effects of stress. Spinach is rich source of the magnesium. One cup of spinach goes a long way toward replenishing magnesium stores. Soybeans and salmon fish, whole grain cereals, nuts, dairy product, bananas, cabbage and cauliflower also high in magnesium. Green leafy vegetables are a rich source of magnesium.

### **6.5 Potassium:**

One of the best ways to reduce high blood pressure is to get enough potassium. Potassium is concerned with cellular excitability. The irritability of the nerves and skeletal and heart muscles is

determined by the relative amounts of potassium, calcium and magnesium. Banana is fine source of potassium. Almost all foodstuffs contain potassium; cereals, dry fruit, and vegetables are good sources of potassium.

### 6.6 Raw Vegetables:

Vegetables supply many nutrients besides providing variety of diet. Crunchy raw vegetables can help fight stress in a purely mechanical way. Raw vegetables salads helps release a clenched jaw and that can ward off tension.

### 6.7 Nuts:

Pistachios, walnuts, or almonds are good sources of healthy fats. If we consume this nuts every day it may help lower the cholesterol and make ease inflammation in heart's arteries, and also make diabetes less likely, and help protect us against the effects of stress. Though: Nuts are rich in calories so doing over eating will make fatty.

### 6.8 Bedtime:

Carbohydrate rich little food at bedtime can speed the release of the brain chemical serotonin and help us sleep better. Since heavy meals before bed can increase the heartburn, simple carbohydrates light food, such as bread or toast with jam or butter. Milk is another bedtime stress-buster is the time-honored glass of warm milk. Research shows that calcium eases anxiety. It is recommending that skim or low-fat milk is better than use of whole milk

A healthy eating habit throughout life helps to maintain physical well-being. Enjoyable social activities help to keep a happy frame of mind. Good nutrition can improve the spirit and quality of life.

## 7. REFERANCES:-

1. Mudambi S. R., Rajagopal M. V., Fifth Edition (2007), *Fundamentals of Foods, Nutrition and Diet Therapy*, New age International (P) Limited, Publishers, New Delhi. Pp 54, 201, 341,348.
2. Joshi Vinay, First Edition (2005), *Stress, From Burnout to Balance*, Response Books, New Delhi.
3. Antia F. P., Abraham Philip., Forth Edition (1997), *Clinical Dietetics and Nutrition*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. Pp 102, 121,150.
4. Dr. Kumar R., DR. Kumar Meenal., Dr. Dash R. J., First Edition (2003); *Guide to Health Living*, Deep & Deep Pub. Pvt, Ltd. Pp 36 to 57, 61 to 64.
5. WWW.apa.org.
6. WWW.Webmd.com
7. WWW.Stressmanagement.Com/ wiki/ stress\_ management
8. En. Wikipedia.org
9. MedicineNet.com