

Occupational stress of women working in professional and non-professional sectors of Kashmir

Division (J&K), India: A comparative study

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate occupational stress of women working in professional and non-professional sectors of Kashmir Division (J&K) - A comparative study. The sample for the study consisted of 400 women working in different professional and non-professional sectors of Kashmir division. Out of 400, 200 were selected from Professional sector viz, Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, College Lecturers, Agriculture Officers, Horticulture Officers, Veterinarians and Bankers and 200 from Non-professional sector viz, Administrators, Social Welfare Officers, Higher Secondary School Principals, Zonal Education Officers, District Forest Officers and undersecretaries. In order to measure the occupational stress among women working in professional and non-professional sectors, occupational stress index developed by A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh was used and it covers the following areas: Role Ambiguity, Role Overload, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for Person, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Strenuous Working Conditions and Unprofitability. The findings of the study revealed that women working in professional and nonprofessional sectors do not differ significantly on occupational stress. It implies that they experience same level of occupational stress which is due to the discrepancy between the demands of the environment or work place and on individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Women Working in Professional sector, women working in Non-professional, Kashmir

1. Introduction

Women have been playing vital roles in households since ages. Now women are also recognized for their value in the workplace and are engaged in wide range of activities of work in addition to their routine domestic work. Building a society where women can breathe freely without fear of oppression, exploitation, and discrimination is the need of the hour, to ensure a better future for the next generation. During earlier days there were some man-made boundaries for women but now women play vital roles in different sectors. Women today are breaking that boundary and are playing the dual role of balancing domestic life as well as professional life, giving a boost to their societal status in the process. The major problems for working women arise out of the dual responsibilities of the working woman - domestic work as well as office work. Though more and more women are coming out in search of paid employment and their families also need their income, the attitude towards women and their role in the family has not undergone much change.

The term used to define ongoing stress that is allied to the place of work is often known as 'Occupational Stress'. Occupational Stress is also known as 'Job Stress', 'stress at workplace' etc. It can be defined as the adverse physical and emotional responses that occur when the necessities of the job do not harmonize the capabilities, resources, or requirements of the employee. As with other forms of pressure, occupational stress can ultimately influence both physical and emotional welfare if not managed efficiently. Stress is an intrinsic element in any type of occupation or career. At its best, the presence of stress can be a motivator that urges the

individual to endeavor for excellence. The concept of Occupational stress is often confused with challenge, but these concepts are not the same. Challenge energizes us psychologically and physically. The challenge also motivates us to discover new skills and master our Occupations. When a challenge is met, we feel relaxed and satisfied (U.S NIOHS, 1999) ^[1]. Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. A high level of occupational stress, not only detrimentally influence the quality, productivity and creativity of the employees but also employee's health, well-being and morale (Cohen and Williamson, 1991) Job allied stress tends to lessen general job satisfaction. The terms work stress, job stress, or occupational stress is used interchangeably (Dollard, 2003).

2. Objectives of the Study

The present study is undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the Occupational Stress of women working in professional and non-professional sectors.
2. To compare women working in professional and non-professional sectors on various dimensions of Occupational Stress.

Hypotheses

In the light of above objectives the following hypotheses have been formulated for the investigation.

1. There is no significance of difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on

occupational stress.

Sample of the Study

The sample for the study consisted of 400 women working in different professional and non-professional sectors of Kashmir division. Out of 400, 200 were selected from Professional sector viz, Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, College Lecturers, Agriculture Officers, Horticulture Officers, Veterinarians and Bankers and 200 from Non-professional sector viz, Administrators, Social Welfare Officers, Higher Secondary School Principals, Zonal Education Officers, District Forest Officers and undersecretaries. The sample was drawn by the process of simple random sampling technique with the following breakup:

Area	Sample
Professional	200
Non-professional	200
Total	400

Tools Used

The data for the present study was collected with the help of an Occupational Stress Index (OSI) by A.K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh. This test contains 46 items and covers the following areas: Role Ambiguity, Role Overload, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for Person, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Strenuous Working Conditions and Unprofitability.

Statistical Treatments

The following statistical treatments was used in the present study: Mean, S.D, t-test

3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Table 1: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sector on composite score of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	143.46	11.31	1.94	Insignificant
Non-Professional	200	141.43	10.06		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The perusal of the table 1 gives the detail about mean; S.D’s and t- test of women working in professional and non-professional sectors on composite score of occupational stress. The table 4.7 makes it clear that both the groups do not differ significantly on occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score of 143.46 and 141.43 respectively. The calculated t-value came out to be 1.90, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the above observations it can be inferred that mean favors both the groups which implies that they experience same level of occupational stress. It is reported that occupational stress of both the groups is due to discrepancy between the demands of the environment or work place and on individual’s ability to carry out and complete these demands.

Table 2: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Role Overload Dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	18.80	4.46	2.97	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	19.94	3.51		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The perusal of the table 2 shows the significance of difference between mean scores of women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Role Overload’ dimension of occupational stress. The mean score in case of women working in professional and non-professional sectors is 18.80 and 19.94 respectively. The obtained t-value is 2.97, which is significant at 0.01 level. From the observation of the results it can be inferred that mean favors women working in non-professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to high work load. It seems that high work load is due to insufficient number of employees and resources. Due to excessive work load they are not able to devote sufficient time to their domestic and personal problems. They tend to dispose of their assigned work by consuming much amount of time as compared to their counterparts.

Table 3: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Role Ambiguity Dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	13.06	2.935	6.90	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	10.69	4.067		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 3 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Role Ambiguity’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 13.06 and 10.69 respectively. The calculated t-value is 6.90 which is significant at 0.01 level. The result revealed that mean favors the women working in professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to role ambiguity. They are seen to be characterized by vague and insufficient information related to job, poor planning, vague expectations of colleagues and supervisors as compared to women working in non-professional sector.

Table 4: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Role Conflict Dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	16.50	4.938	7.68	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	12.95	4.300		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 4 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Role Conflict’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 16.50 and 12.95 respectively. The calculated t-value is 7.68, which is significant at 0.01 level. The result revealed that mean favors

the women working in professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to role conflict. It is reported that they experience contradictory instructions from higher officers, vague instructions and insufficient facilities regarding new assignments. It further revealed that they have contradiction between job instructions and formal working procedures as compared to their counterparts.

Table 5: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	8.83	3.584	3.48	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	9.94	2.908		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 5 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Unreasonable group and Political Pressure’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 8.83 and 9.94 respectively. The calculated t-value is 3.48, which is significant at 0.01 level. The result revealed that mean favors the women working in non-professional sector which implies that occupational stress in among them is due to unreasonable group and political pressure. It seems that they find it difficult to adjust themselves with unreasonable group and political pressures as compared to their counterparts.

Table 6: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Responsibility for person dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	5.69	2.440	2.39	Sig. at 0.05 level
Non-Professional	200	6.22	1.748		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 6 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Responsibility for Persons’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 5.69 and 6.22 respectively. The calculated t-value is 2.39, which is significant at 0.01 level. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors the women working in non-professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to responsibility for persons. It is reported that responsibility for the efficiency and productivity of many employees is thrust upon them. They are responsible for the future of the number of employees and have to bear the responsibility for the progress and prosperity of the organization as compared to their counterparts.

Table 7: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Under-participation dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	14.83	4.793	1.60	Insignificant
Non-Professional	200	15.49	3.172		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 7 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Under participation’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional sector have obtained mean score 14.83 and 15.49 respectively. The calculated t-value is 1.60, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors both the groups which implies that they have similar characteristics to have low power in the organization and do not accept the suggestions made by others. They do not participate actively in framing new policies and programmers.

Table 8: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Powerlessness dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	11.75	2.263	4.46	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	12.79	2.490		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 8 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Powerlessness’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional sector have obtained mean score 11.75 and 12.79 respectively. The calculated t-value is 4.46, which is significant at 0.01 level. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors women working in professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to powerlessness. Former group have characteristics for acceptance of decisions taken by the persons among employees. They remain more coordinated and are influenced by the opinion of others in making appointments for important posts as compared to their counterparts.

Table 9: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Poor peer Relations dimension of Occupational Stress.

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	14.61	2.305	0.49	Insignificant
Non-Professional	200	14.73	2.695		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 9 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Poor Peer Relations’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 14.61 and 14.73 respectively. The calculated t-value is 0.49, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors both the groups which implies that they have similar characteristics to establish interpersonal relationship with colleagues or other staff members and lack of cooperation in solving administrative problems.

Table 10: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Intrinsic Impoverishment dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	12.75	2.173	0.91	Insignificant
Non-Professional	200	12.58	1.574		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 10 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Intrinsic Impoverishment’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 12.75 and 12.58 respectively. The calculated t-value is 0.91, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors both the groups which implies that they tend to have monotonous nature of assignments. It seems that they have the capacity to develop aptitude and proficiency and place of suggestions in problem solving, but it seems that they do not get ample opportunity to utilize their abilities and experiences independently.

Table 11: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Law Status dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	12.36	1.810	0.62	Insignificant
Non-Professional	200	12.23	2.356		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 11 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Low Status’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional sector have obtained mean score 12.36 and 12.23 respectively. The calculated t-value is 0.62, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors both the groups which implies that they are similar on low status. They believe that their job is enhancing their social status and due significance is given by higher authorities to the post and work.

Table 12: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on strenuous working condition dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	9.85	1.931	3.44	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	10.65	2.767		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 12 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Strenuous Working Conditions’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 9.85 and 10.65 respectively. The calculated t-value is 3.44, which failed to arrive at any level of significance. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors women working in professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to strenuous working condition. It seems that they work under tense

circumstances and the assignments are risky and complicated. There working conditions are unsatisfactory as compared to their counterparts.

Table 13: Showing the mean comparison between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on Unprofitability dimension of Occupational Stress

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Level of Sig.
Professional	200	4.45	1.901	7.60	Sig. at 0.01 level
Non-Professional	200	3.25	1.495		

Source: Primary Survey (2014-2015)

The result in the table 13 shows the significance of mean difference between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on ‘Unprofitability’ dimension of occupational stress. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors have obtained mean score 4.45 and 3.25 respectively. The calculated t-value is 7.60, which is significant at 0.01 level, $p > 0.10$. From the observations of the result it can be inferred that mean favors women working in professional sector which implies that occupational stress among them is due to unprofitability. It seems that they tend to be unprofitable with regard to low salary in comparison to the quantum of labor or work. There may be absence of rewards and lack of motivation as compared to their counterparts.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data, the following conclusions have been drawn from the present study:

1. Women working in professional and non-professional sectors do not differ significantly on occupational stress. It implies that they experience same level of occupational stress which is due to the discrepancy between the demands of the environment or work place and on individual’s ability to carry out and complete these demands.
2. Women working in non-professional sector score high on Role Overload. It seems that occupational stress among them is due to high workload, insufficient staff, lack of time and personal problems as compared to their counterparts. Mean favours the women working in professional sector on Role Ambiguity. It implies that they were seen to be characterized by vague and insufficient information related to job. It has been found that Role Conflict of women working in professional sector is due to contradiction between job instruction and formal working conditions as compared to their counterparts.
3. It has been found that unreasonable group and political pressure in women working in non-professional sector is due to the difficulty to adjust themselves with unreasonable and political pressure and formal rules and instruction. Mean favor’s the women working in non-professional sector on responsibility for persons. They were reported that responsibility for efficiency and productivity of many employees is thrust upon them.
4. No significant difference has been found between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on under participation. Both the groups have similar characteristics to have low power in the organization and do not accept the suggestions made by others.

5. Women working in non-professional sector score high on powerlessness. They have characteristics for acceptance of decisions taken by the person among employees, coordination of interests and considering opinions in making appointments for important posts. Both the groups viz; on poor peer relations have similar characteristics to establish interpersonal relationship with the colleagues/ other staff members and lack of cooperation in solving administrative problems.
6. No significant difference has been found between women working in professional and non-professional sectors on intrinsic impoverishment. Both the groups tend to have monotonous nature of assignments and opportunity to utilize abilities and experiences independently.
7. Mean score favors both women working in professional and non-professional sectors on low status which implies that both the groups believe that their job is enhancing social status and due significance is given by higher authorities to the post and work. It has been found that mean score favors women working in non-professional sector on strenuous working conditions. They seem to work under tense, risky and complicated situation. The working conditions are unsatisfactory as compared to their counterparts. Women working in professional sector score high on unprofitability which implies that they tend to be unprofitable with regard to low salary comparison to the quantum of labor /work, absence of rewards and lack of motivation as compared to women working in non-professional sector.

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