



**A STUDY OF STRESS OF URBAN EMPLOYED WOMEN AND URBAN  
 UNEMPLOYED WOMEN WITH REGARD TO THE PERFORMANCE  
 OF THEIR CHILDREN IN SPORTS**

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**Abstract:** In every historic stage of civilization women have constituted half of India's population. In spite of this fact, the position of women has not been the same in all the stages of history. Women in significant numbers have now entered the portals of formal education both at higher levels and professional levels. In the realm of work, new frontiers had opened up for women. When women assume multiple roles there is bound to be work-family conflict because the time and energy is shared, clubbed and extended across the two spheres of activity. When conflicts between these two domains occur its consequences are reflected on the women. Sports activities are options provided to students in the school and are conducted outside the ambit of academics; the parents experience stress when their children may not excel in this area. This study was carried out to find the level of stress experienced by urban employed women (300), urban unemployed women (300) with regard to the performance of their children in sports activities. For this self-developed questionnaire was used. The level of stress experienced by the respondents was divided into three parts based on especially designed scale, denoting low stress, medium stress and high stress. 'Z' test was applied to check the difference in the level of stress experienced by the women. The results showed that employed women experienced similar level of stress as that of stress experienced by unemployed women.

**Keywords:** Stress, Urban Employed Women, Urban Unemployed Women, Sports Activities.

**Introduction:**

Standing at the Present of time, if one looks back at the Past- the story and the history of woman, her status appears amazingly wonderful, thrilling and at the same time shocking, because of the crisis she came across and the ordeals she has passed through. Across centuries and across time, the role of women remains rooted into eternity. It forever remains the same and at the same time goes through many transitions. Woman's life can be compared to a circle. In this circle she stands at the centre point. Her various roles are like the needle of a compass that rotates around her personality.

In every historic stage of civilization women have constituted half of India's population. In spite of this fact, the position of women has not been the same in all the stages of history. According to Navneetha Rath (1996), the position of women has been variously estimated and diametrically opposite views are current regarding their place in the different stages of Indian civilization. Today, women's track of life has changed from hearth and home to

office (working place) and society. This journey has never been an easy going achievement for them. Women in significant numbers have now entered the portals of formal education both at higher levels and professional levels. In the realm of work, new frontiers had opened up for women. Women have grown up with the benefit of education and dreamt of a different role and life for themselves. Family and work are the most important domains in life for employed women. When conflicts between these two domains occur, its consequences are reflected in both, job organization, domestic life as well as on the women too. When women assume multiple roles there is bound to be work-family conflict because the time and energy is shared, clubbed and extended across the two spheres of activity. Dr. S.S. Rao and Aiswarya Ramsundaram (2007) have opined that being primarily responsible for house hold work, women express higher degree of stress and lower levels of satisfaction, with their work life balance, than men do and this is particularly prevalent among highly

educated women, with high levels of responsibility.

Stress is a part and parcel of every person's life. Both men and women deal with stress, but it is women who are its most common victims, particularly the working category of women who find themselves struggling with stress more than others. The multi-tasking modern women are knowingly or unknowingly undergoing through stressful situations due to various reasons that they may not know of, like lack of family support and encouragement, colleague behaviour and boss temperament in office, dissatisfaction from spouse and in laws, children's rough behaviour and academic performance, etc, may create havoc in their minds. According to Dr. Debleena Kumar (2013), stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Simply put, stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on our body or mind. Stress results in physical or psychological strain that affects mind or human physique.

The environment to which the child is subjected to also provides for a major cause of stress amongst mothers. This includes the learning place, that is, the school, other students in the class, their composition, their academic, financial and social status, competition among the students as well as the pressure to excel and comparisons made by parents regarding school performance and results. The consistent educational programming of the child therefore starts becoming the major events of parental life resulting into stress after middle school or during high school days of the child. To be a working mother makes the task of bringing up her children, more challenging. Children's behaviour and academic performance may be another major cause of stress and anxiety and may create havoc in their mind. Sports are one of the major areas which are being focused upon and are advocated strongly in the modern education system. Though sports activities are options provided to students in the school and are conducted outside the ambit of academics, the parents experience stress when their children may not excel in this area.

According to Rena L. Repetti (1996) performance in social and academic realms play an increasingly important role in self-concept during middle school and preadolescence. The frustration, stress and anxiety related to performance in academics as well as school, and are easily transferred to the parents as they aspire that their children score best of marks and grade in the school.

#### **Aim of the Study:**

To compare stress experienced by urban employed and urban unemployed women of Nagpur due to the performance of their children in sports.

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. To assess and compare the level of stress experienced by urban employed women and urban unemployed women with respect to age.
2. To assess and compare the level of stress experienced by employed and unemployed women due to the performance of their children in sports activities.

#### **Hypothesis**

1. The level of stress experienced by urban employed women is significantly higher than that of the urban unemployed women with respect to their age.
2. The level of stress experienced by urban employed women is significantly more than that of the urban unemployed mothers with respect to the performance in sports activities.

#### **Sample**

The target number of respondents for the research was 600 women, comprising of 300 employed women and 300 unemployed women.

#### **Methodology**

The main focus of the present research was to understand, assess and analyze the stress experienced by urban employed women and urban unemployed women with regard to the performance of their children in sports activities. For this 300 urban employed women and 300 urban unemployed women were selected. A total of 600 urban women and their stress were studied.

#### **Data Analysis**

Stress is inevitable in today's modern life style. It takes toll on every person

irrespective of age, class, educational qualification, income, profession of that person. In spite of this stress is necessary for optimum performance. Without stress a person cannot perform.

In the present research level of stress experienced by urban employed women and urban unemployed women due to the performance of their children in sports was studied.

Table-1. Level of Stress experienced by Employed Women and Unemployed Women from with respect to Age

Level of Stress	Age of Women	Employed Women				Unemployed Women				Z(CAL) *
		Frequency	%	Mean	SD	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	
LOW	30-35	19	6.33	16.26	4.15	57	19.0	17.42	3.46	1.0978
	35-40	7	2.33	17.57	4.43	61	20.33	18.23	3.45	0.3811
	40-45	21	7.0	16.95	3.94	59	19.67	17.78	3.72	0.8411
MEDIUM	30-35	12	4.0	39.58	5.16	23	7.67	37.35	7.32	1.0456
	35-40	27	9.0	37.07	6.30	16	5.33	36.44	6.48	0.3113
	40-45	53	17.67	36.25	6.82	24	8.0	38.83	6.4	1.6049
HIGH	30-35	49	16.33	74.41	11.08	10	3.33	69.67	11.36	1.2075
	35-40	66	22.0	68.67	11.29	18	6.0	71.61	9.99	1.0753
	40-45	46	15.33	68.43	11.50	32	10.67	70.41	10.71	0.7791
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>			<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>			

5 % level of significance is - 1.96

The above table indicates the level of stress experienced by urban employed women and urban unemployed women. It is observed from the table that the employed mothers of age group of 30-35 years have high stress ( $74.41 \pm 11.08$ ) as compared to the level of stress of unemployed mothers of the same age group ( $69.67 \pm 11.36$ ). In the present study the age group 30-35 years is the lowest age group and hence it shows that lower the age the level of stress is higher

It is inferred from the table that the individual Z (CAL) values are less than the Z (TAB) values for the respective age groups of women. Hence, the hypothesis, "The level of stress experienced by urban employed women is significantly higher than that of the urban unemployed women with respect to their age", is accepted.

This means that urban employed women experience higher level of stress than that of the urban unemployed women.

#### Discussion:

The employed mothers exhibit a higher level of stress than their unemployed counterparts as they have to manage both, home as well as the work place. The amount of work to be taken care of at home is not reduced or shared just because she is a working woman. More often than not, she has to prove to others at home- as she is being continuously judged that she can manage both- home as well as her job. The constant pressure of trying to prove herself, creates a pressure which gets in-built and results in stress.

In the workplace the working woman has to take extra efforts to perform better than her male counterpart; to gain the same amount of respect and recognition that the male counterpart gets. She is also constantly on her guard that her reputation is not questioned. Thus the employed mothers are expected to be alert and vigilant constantly which leads to stress and anxiety.

Table-2. Level of Stress experienced by Employed and Unemployed Women with respect to the Performance of their Children in Sports Activities

Level of Stress	Age	Employed Women				Unemployed Women				Z(CAL) *
		Frequency	%	Mean	SD	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	
LOW	30-35	12	4.0	5.58	1.24	53	17.67	5.57	1.32	10.8160
	35-40	25	8.33	5.32	1.44	61	20.33	5.21	1.40	11.4378
	40-45	16	5.33	5.69	1.45	65	21.67	4.83	1.66	10.1705
MEDIUM	30-35	9	3.0	11.44	1.49	14	4.67	11	2.04	13.4912
	35-40	14	4.67	11.71	1.54	24	8.0	11.46	1.72	18.7990
	40-45	22	7.33	11.77	1.97	28	9.33	10.93	1.86	17.8934
HIGH	30-35	59	19.67	18.51	2.10	22	7.33	18.77	2.33	28.9407
	35-40	61	20.33	18.26	2.34	11	3.67	17.9	2.77	17.9421
	40-45	82	27.33	18.12	2.20	22	7.33	18.45	2.52	26.9994
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>			<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>			

\* Z (TAB) at 5 % level of significance is - 1.96

The above table indicates the stress experienced by employed and unemployed women due to the performance of their children in the sports.

The level of stress experienced by the respondents due to the performance of their children in the sports is divided into three parts based on the following scale, especially designed, denoting low stress, medium stress and high stress. The calculated mean values show that the level of stress experienced by the employed and unemployed mothers with respect to the performance of their children in sports is more or less same except for low level of stress at the age of 40-45 years (Mean value for employed women  $5.58 \pm 5.32 \pm 5.69$  and for unemployed women  $5.57 \pm 5.21 \pm 4.83$ ).

The individual Z (CAL) value is more than the Z (TAB) value for the respective age groups with respect to the stress experienced by the employed and unemployed women due to performance of the children in the sports does not support the hypothesis. Hence the hypothesis, "The level of stress experienced by urban employed women is significantly more than that of the urban unemployed mothers with respect to the performance in sports activities", is rejected.

This means that there is no significant difference between the level of stress

experienced by employed and unemployed women with respect to the performance of their children in sports.

#### Discussion:

The most significant fact that was revealed was that, 67.33% ( $19.67+20.33=27.33$ ) of the employed mothers experienced high stress, similarly 18.33% ( $7.33+3.67+7.33$ ) of unemployed women experienced high stress due to the performance of their children in sports activities. On application of higher statistics (Z test) it was observed that the level of stress experienced by the employed mothers was not significantly more than that experienced by unemployed mothers.

Sports activities exist at all levels of education now and although they are termed as 'voluntary', in reality it is not so. Students are now required to participate in these activities too, with tough competition becoming the order of the day. Participation of the child in competitions related to sports is not an exception any more.

Mothers, whether employed or unemployed experience the same amount of stress with respect to the performance of their children in sports activities. Every mother, especially the urban mother understands the importance of the all-round development of the child and they are also

able to appreciate that the schools also encourage and work towards developing a wholesome personality of their students. But mothers also realize that their children may not be proficient in all the activities like debate, drama, sports, art etc. Some amount of anxiety is thus generated in mothers when they compare their child with those children who fare better and this leads to stress in them.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation:**

Due to the inclusion of the different types of competitive activities into the educational system, the school curriculum has become too large and loaded. This has affected children as well as their parents, especially the mothers. This study was carried out to find the level of stress experienced by two groups of women – urban employed women and urban unemployed women. .

Extra-curricular activities, especially sports activities are regarded as a very important aspect for the overall personality development of the children. These give an additional dimension to their overall approach towards life and certainly make them more social, more concerned and more responsible as a human being. Though some studies conclude that sports are stress busters, the above study concludes that sport is one of the causes that develop stress in mothers. The reason lies in the mothers' expectations from their children to excel in all areas of academics.

It is therefore recommended that sports should be introduced in schools as a recreational activity and not as a competitive activity. Later it can be introduced as competitive sports for children who can handle stress generated through these sports and should be encouraged to take up sports on a competitive level. Whereas children who are inactive in sports and can't handle stress generated by competitive stress should be encouraged to take up sports as recreational activity so as to create interest in sports.

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