

## **Effect of stress on the health of women workers involved in garment manufacturing units**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper is aimed at determining the effect of work place stress on job performance of sewing machine operators'. The research conducted on 55 female worker of garment manufacturing industry in Ghaziabad district, Uttar Pradesh. Primary data was collected through semi structured interview schedule. The results obtained from the data revealed that work place stress and job performance cause tension and give birth to various types of diseases. Thus it was recommended that employer should minimize stress by reducing work load, having a good balance between work life and family life and should take rest periods in between the working hours which help to reduce the stress and also improve their job performance.

**Key Words :** Workplace Stress, Garment Industry, Job Performance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Stress is described as, "a physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness The occupational stress adversely affects the health and performance of the employees of an organization. According to Braaten Dan (2000), job 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'. Yates and Iva (2005) the study work titled "Reducing Occupational Stress", the survey explains in detail that 40% of worker in a manufacturing company reported that their job was very stressful and another 25% expressed that this job was extremely increasing the stress towards their family life, this survey has identified various job conditions that can be adopted to maintain a stress less work life which leads to a stress less family life. Epidemiological evidence has suggested that the work environment, especially work stress, plays an important role in the development of hypertension.

Long working hours may increase the development of hypertension through several pathways. Firstly long working longer hours implies shorter time available for recovery, and insufficient time for sleep is thought to be associated with disruption of physiological process. Secondly, long working hours are thought to be linked to hypertension risk related to lifestyles and behaviours, including smoking, unhealthy diet, and sedentary lifestyle. The main causes of stress among working women are fear of unknown situation and control over the duties to be carried out and over the organization of work. Stress can be aggravated by the fear of losing a job, relationship problems, violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, or other non occupational factors such as family problems, multiple roles, health anxieties, commuting and financial worries. The stress at work leads to physical and mental hazards. At an extreme, long term stress at work creates psychological disorders which results in the absence of employees from job. Stress affects negatively both work and personal life an individual. Immune system is badly affected by the stress by which an ability of an individual

to fight against diseases decreases. Stress at work also results in bad habits like smoking and more intakes of drugs by employees (WHO, 2004).

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ghaziabad district of U.P. The total sample size selected for the study was comprised of 55 female sewing machine operators who were stitching suits in garment manufacturing units. The data was collected through semi structured interview schedule.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that maximum of 50.9% women workers work 6-8 hours per day while 34.5 % and 14.5% women do work for 8-10 hours and more than 10 hours respectively. Therefore, it is concluded that the female workers put in longer working hours.

Table 2 indicates that maximum of 94.5% female workers never smoked bidis or cigarettes. While 3.6 % were current smokers and 1.8 % female workers were current smokers. So, it shows that women workers

smoked to relieve themselves from unusual working hours, monotonous work, stress and tension while performing the activity.

Table 3 indicates that stressful condition at the workplace leads to various types of diseases. It was reported that maximum of 56.4% female workers were suffering from a problem of blood pressure. 21.8 % female workers were having headache problem due to long working hours and unhealthy working conditions. 16.4% were having depression/tension of completing the stitching order on time. 3.6 % and 1.81 % female workers were suffering from diabetes and heart diseases.

### Conclusion:

The study concludes that work environment, long working hours, monotonous work, relationship between workers and supervisors, order completion on time are some of the causes of stress which leads to various types of diseases like hypertension, diabetes, depression, heart disease, headache etc. some of the female workers smoke cigarettes to relieve themselves from unusual working hours, stress and tension while performing the activity. Thus it is recommended that employer should

Table 1 : Distribution of workers according to the Length of working hours		
Total Respondents=110		
Smoking Habbits	Women workers	
	Frequency (n=55)	Percentage (%)
6-8 hrs	28	50.9
8-10 hrs	19	34.5
> Than 10 hrs	8	14.5

Table 2 : Distribution of the workers according to their habits of smoking		
Total Respondents=110		
Smoking Habbits	Women workers	
	Frequency (n=55)	Percentage (%)
Never smoked	52	94.5
Ex- smoker	2	3.6
Current smoker	1	1.8

Table 3 : Distribution of the workers according to their habits of smoking		
Total Respondents=110		
Stress related diseases	Women workers	
	Frequency (n=55)	Percentage (%)
Blood Pressure	31	56.4
Diabetes	2	3.6
Headache	12	21.8
Depression/tension	9	16.4
Heart disease	1	1.81

minimize stress by reducing work load, having a good balance between work life and family life and should take rest periods in between the working hours which will help to reduce the stress and also improve their job performance.

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