



Domestic Violence and Stress experienced by Urban and Rural Women

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Abstract: Woman is a backbone of any society. A healthy woman can make her home a heaven. But since ages woman has been subjected to domestic violence. Domestic violence is a global phenomenon. It has its roots in the history of the world. A woman subjected to this loses her self esteem and self-satisfaction towards life. Studies have shown that women fall prey to stress caused by domestic violence. Though stress is inevitable, long term stressful situation can harm a person in a serious way.

This study was undertaken to examine the level of stress experienced by rural and urban women due to domestic violence and the types of coping techniques used by them. For this, urban women (48) and rural women (48) were selected. A self-developed questionnaire was used to measure level of stress experienced by the respondents. This 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 respondents. The results showed that both urban and rural women experience high level of stress due to domestic violence and urban women use more positive coping techniques than compared to their rural counterparts.

Keywords: Stress, Domestic Violence, Coping Techniques and Women.

Introduction:

Domestic violence against women is a global phenomenon, a phenomenon not pertaining to one community or one country. It has its roots in the history of the world. Ravneet Kaur and Suneela Garg(2008) opined,“This problem is not only widely dispersed geographically, but its incidence is also extensive, making it a typical and accepted behavior.”In India domestic violence has become pervasive and deeply rooted in Indian history and societal norms.According to Jayanta Choudhury, Moutoshi Deb (2015), “Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological abuse directed at an intimate partner to establish and maintain power and control.”Almeida and Durkin’s (1999) has defined domestic violence as: “The patterned and repeated use of coercive and controlling behavior to limit, direct and shape a partner’s thoughts, feelings and actions.”

Domestic violence is wide spread, deeply ingrained and has serious effect on women's health and well-being. This is supported by a research by Rajib Lochan Dhar (2014), which showed that domestic violence affects physical and mental health of the rural women. Keeping in view the consequences of domestic violence on women, the present study aims to examine level of stress experienced by the urban and rural women and the coping mechanisms adopted by them to reduce stress. Research has proved that stress is an integral part of human life. It is necessary for optimum performance and has become a way of life. According to S. P. Behere (2011), “The human body tries to adjust to different circumstances and continuously changing environment. In this process, the body has to perform extra work which results in the wear and tear of the body”. To avoid the dangerous effects of stress one has to manage stress in a healthy way. Baron, R. A. (1996) has put forth several healthy coping techniques like physiological, cognitive and behavioural coping techniques, controlled breathing, meditation, physical exercise, Yoga, enjoying music, developing hobbies, monitoring one’s thoughts in a positive direction, modifying the negative thoughts into more adaptive ones, changing oneself instead of the stressor, learning how to make time work for us instead of against us, **learning to say “no”, avoiding hot-button topics, etc.**

Although the phrase ‘Coping Techniques’ is supposed to have a positive connotation, it is also used in a negative manner. It is mostly done as an escape mechanism by individuals unknowingly and thus instead of relieving oneself of tension and stress, the repercussion may be negative. Negative coping techniques are acceptable to some extent when used rarely but excessive use of negative coping techniques may temporarily reduce stress, but may cause more damage in the long run. Some

of the negative coping techniques are use of foul language, withdrawal, over-eating, under-eating, substance abuse, procrastination, violence towards oneself and others, increased and frequent use of medication, etc

Aim of the Study:

To examine domestic violence and stress experienced by urban and rural women.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence.
2. To find out the positive and negative coping techniques used by rural and urban women to reduce the stress caused due to domestic violence.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no difference between the level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence.
2. There is no significant difference between the positive and negative coping techniques used by the rural and urban women to reduce stress.

Sample:

The target number of respondents for the research paper was 50 Urban and 50 Rural Women (Total 100 women) who experience incidents of domestic violence on day to day basis. But four women did not respond correctly to the questions asked in the questionnaire, hence only 48 Urban and 48 Rural Women were selected for the study.

Methodology:

The main focus of the present study was to understand, assess and analyze the level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence and the coping techniques used by them. For this the respondents were administered a self-developed questionnaire specially designed by the researcher keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis:

Stress takes its toll on every person. In spite of this, it is necessary for optimum performance. In the present study, level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence was studied.

Table No. 1**Level of Stress experienced by Urban and Rural Women due to Domestic Violence**

Level of Stress	Urban Women				Rural Women				Z(CAL) *
	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	
Low	08	16.67	12.63	1.68	10	20.83	15.7	2.05	0.94
Medium	13	27.08	28.77	1.96	09	18.75	34.56	1.33	1.93
High	27	56.25	89.70	1.97	29	60.42	88.96	2.65	0.40
Total	48	100			48	100			

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

The above table indicates the stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence. The level of stress experienced by the respondents is divided into three parts based on the scale, especially designed, denoting low, medium and high. It is also observed that 16.67 % urban women and 20.83 % rural women experience low level of stress. Similarly, 56.25% urban women and 60.42% rural women experience high level of stress. The calculated mean values show that both urban and rural women experienced higher level of stress. (Mean value for urban women is 89.70 and for rural women is 88.96).

The individual Z (CAL) value is less than the Z (TAB) value for the respective groups with respect to the level of stress experienced by the urban and rural women which supports the hypothesis. This means that there is no difference between the level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence.

Hence the hypothesis, “There is no difference between the level of stress experienced by urban and rural women due to domestic violence” is accepted.

Table No. 2**Positive and Negative Coping Techniques used by Urban and Rural Women**

Coping Techniques	Urban Women				Rural Women				Z(CAL) *
	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	Frequency	%	Mean	SD	
Positive	34	70.83	15.2	2.32	11	22.92	4.73	2.24	4.35
Negative	14	29.17	4.00	2.08	37	77.08	8.43	0.99	2.04
	48	100			48	100			

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

In order to deal with stress, every individual uses some coping techniques. Selection of coping techniques may not be only negative or positive, it is mostly overlapping. When more of the positive coping techniques are used, it results in lesser degree of stress and vice versa.

From the above table it is observed that, 70.83% urban and 22.92% rural women use more positive coping techniques. And 29.17% urban and 77.08% rural women use negative coping techniques.

The calculated mean values show that urban women use more of positive coping techniques and less of negative coping techniques than compared rural women. (Mean value for urban women is 15.2 for positive coping techniques and 4.73 for negative coping techniques whereas for rural women it 4.0 for positive coping techniques and 8.43 for negative coping techniques.).

The individual Z (CAL) value is more than the Z (TAB) value for the respective groups with respect to the use of positive and negative coping techniques by the urban and rural women which does not support the hypothesis. This means that there is a difference between the use of positive and negative coping techniques by the urban and rural women

Hence the hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the positive and negative coping techniques used by the rural and urban women to reduce stress." is rejected.

Discussion:

Domestic violence is prevalent in Indian society. In a study by Vaishali Raje (2015), "The life time prevalence of overall violence was observed to be on a higher side, in urban respondents than in rural respondents".

From Table No. 1, the most significant fact that was revealed was that, 56.25% and 60.42% of urban women of rural women respectively experience high level of stress. On application of higher statistics (Z test) it was observed that the urban and rural women experience higher level of stress due to the domestic violence. The major cause of stress in these women was attributed to reasons like-being ill-treated by the family members, unequal and gender biased treatment at home, physical and psychological violence, continuous nagging, increased economic domestic violence, inability to protect themselves from violence, etc. This result is supported by a study by Hira Abbas, Muhammad Shah (2017),“Women facing domestic violence and spousal violence scored high on depression, perceived stress and low on life satisfaction”.

The most significant fact that was revealed from Table No. 2, was that, 70.83% and 22.92% of urban women of rural women respectively,positive coping techniques. On application of higher statistics (Z test) it was observed that urban women use more of positive coping techniques than rural women.

From Table No.2, it is inferred that, being residents of cities, urban women have better exposure to many things that help them to use positive coping techniques. Unlike rural women, urban women are literate and educated which also helps them to understand the effects of stress, the advantages and disadvantages of positive coping mechanisms and negative coping mechanisms, respectively. As rural women are not well read they are unable to understand that the use of negative coping techniques may give temporary relief from stress, but in the long run they are not helpful and may cause more stress. A study by Sarah Wood (2004) supports the findings as it states, “The proportion of participants using and reporting helpfulness of the coping strategies was similar between the urban and rural women. However, some strategies were strikingly different in use and helpfulness. Women in the urban sample, on average, used strategies within the legal category more often and found legal mechanisms to be more useful than rural women”.

Conclusion:

Domestic violence plays havoc on women psyche. The study examined the stress experienced by rural and urban women and the findings show that both the groups of women do experience high level of stress due to domestic violence. The findings further state that urban women use more of positive coping techniques than rural women and hence are able to manage stress.

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