Chinese Journal of Experimental Traditional Medical formulae

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON STRESS AMONG EMPLOYED WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYED WOMEN AND ITS MANAGEMENT.

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ABSTRACT

Background: However, the relationship that family involvement seems to have is more complex than the work involvement in work to family conflict relationship. As per the research family involvement was found to have cross-domain effects, as it was found to be associated with lower levels of work–family conflict. found a positive relationship between family involvement and work–family conflict, a relationship that was stronger for males than females. Women would be experiencing more of family to-work conflict on account of family role involvement, childcare responsibilities, and elderly care responsibilities at home, thus leading to demand for higher family involvement **Methodology:** In this study a quantitative descriptive survey approach was adopted to assess the knowledge of college students regarding health effects of mobile addiction. Sample consists of 50 Employed Women and 50 Unemployed women in selected Community area of Jaipur was selected using convenience sampling technique. A structured knowledge questionnaire based on socio demographic variables to assess stress among employed women and unemployed women and its management through Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) And Mindfulness Breathing and a behavioural checklist to assess the Effectiveness of PMRT and Mindfulness Breathing was adopted by the investigator for data collection. The structured knowledge questionnaire and behavioural checklist were validated by experts. Reliability of the tool was done using the Split Half Techniques Spearman. **Result:** The finding of the study revealed that Majority 80% of employed women had severe stress, followed by 16% had moderate stress and 04% had mild stress Majority 60% of unemployed women had mild stress, followed by 28% had moderate stress and 12% had severe stress. The findings of the studies have implications for nursing practice, nursing education, nursing administration and nursing research. **Conclusion:** Majority 80% of employed women had severe stress, followed by 16% had moderate stress and 04% had mild stress. Majority 60% of unemployed women had mild stress, followed by 28% had moderate stress and 12% had severe stress.

Keywords: Mindfulness Breathing, Stress, PMRT, Women, Disequilibrium.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is commonly defined as a state of mental tension or worry caused by challenging circumstances.[1] It is a natural human response that can, in the short term, boost alertness and performance. However, prolonged or chronic stress can lead to serious health problems, affecting both psychological and physical well-being. Women's health in particular is vulnerable to the effects of stress; women tend to report more stress-related symptoms (e.g. headaches, fatigue, irritability) and are more prone to stress-aggravated conditions such as anxiety and depression.[2] Epidemiological data

support this gender disparity – for example, a national survey in India found that neurosis and stress-related disorders were nearly twice as prevalent in females as in males.[3]These findings underscore that stress is not only a universal health concern but one that can disproportionately impact women.

Women's experiences of stress can also differ based on their employment status and associated roles. Employed women often face a dual burden of workplace duties and domestic responsibilities, leading to work–family conflicts and elevated stress levels. Juggling professional demands with traditional caregiving roles means working women frequently struggle to maintain a work-life balance, a challenge linked with greater psychological distress.[4] On the other hand, unemployed women – typically homemakers – are not exempt from stress; managing household work, childcare, and social expectations can significantly affect their mental well-being.[5] Comparative studies have noted that overall stress levels can be higher among working women than their non-working counterparts. compared to unemployed women. Such differences suggest that a woman's work status and role obligations are important factors influencing her stress experience.[6]

Given the health risks posed by unmanaged stress, effective stress-management strategies are critical. A range of non-pharmacological interventions has been explored, among which Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and mindfulness-based breathing exercises are prominent. PMRT involves the systematic tensing and relaxing of muscle groups and has shown efficacy in reducing stress and improving mental health outcomes.[7]

Evidence from clinical studies indicates that regular practice of Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique PMRT can significantly lower stress, anxiety, and even depression levels in adults. Mindfulness breathing, a meditative practice focusing on deep, attentive breathing, is another well-established technique for stress reduction. Studies demonstrate that mindfulness breathing exercises help alleviate perceived stress and promote emotional well-being.[7] These techniques are cost-effective, easy to teach, and can be practiced independently, making them suitable for community settings. Implementing such stress management methods may be especially beneficial for women, by empowering them to cope with daily stressors in healthy ways.

In the Indian context, understanding stress among women through the lens of employment status is particularly relevant. Rapid industrialization and social change in recent decades have altered traditional gender roles; many women now simultaneously serve as earners, mothers, and homemakers, which increases their stress burden.[8] Jaipur, as a growing urban center in India, exemplifies these evolving dynamics where women juggle modern work opportunities and conventional family roles. Yet, there is a paucity of research comparing stress in employed versus unemployed women in such settings.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Stress is a significant psychosocial concern that adversely affects the mental health and overall well-being of women, particularly in the context of their employment status. According to the National Mental Health Survey of India (2015–16), approximately 13.7% of the population suffers from various mental health disorders, with women being disproportionately affected due to a multitude of gender-specific socio-cultural roles and expectations.[9] Employed women are especially vulnerable to stress owing to the dual responsibilities of professional obligations and domestic duties, including childcare and elder care. Conversely, unemployed women may experience stress linked to financial dependency, reduced autonomy, and societal stigma.[10]

Recent evidence further highlights this disparity. A comparative study conducted in Visnagar, Gujarat, revealed that 80% of employed women experienced severe levels of stress, while 60% of unemployed

women exhibited only mild stress symptoms. This indicates that employment status is significantly associated with the intensity of psychological stress among women. Additionally, financial stability was found to be a critical determinant, where women with higher monthly incomes reported comparatively lower stress levels, regardless of employment status.[11]

The gender gap in employment adds another layer of complexity. As per The Economic Times (2023), the unemployment rate among Indian women remains significantly higher at 8.7%, compared to 4% among men with similar qualifications. This discrepancy underscores the need for mental health interventions that account for both employment status and financial independence.[12]

Given these findings, there is a compelling need to implement evidence-based stress management techniques that are both accessible and effective. Techniques such as Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing have shown promising outcomes in reducing stress and promoting emotional regulation. However, limited research exists that compares their effectiveness across different population groups based on employment status.

Therefore, the present study is essential to bridge this research gap by comparatively assessing stress levels among employed and unemployed women and evaluating the effectiveness of PMRT and Mindfulness Breathing as stress management strategies. The outcomes will have significant implications for public health, community nursing, and the development of tailored interventions to enhance women's mental health and resilience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach: The present study employed a quantitative research approach, focusing on the collection and analysis of numerical data to assess the level of stress among employed and unemployed women and evaluate the effectiveness of stress management techniques. **Research Design:** A non-experimental descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This design enabled the investigator to observe and compare stress levels without manipulating the independent variables.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in selected community areas of Jaipur, Rajasthan, providing a relevant urban context where both employed and unemployed women could be accessed.

Variables

- Independent Variable: Practice of Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing.
- Dependent Variable: Level of stress among employed and unemployed women.

Population

The target population included adult women (employed and unemployed) residing in the selected community areas of Jaipur.

Sample

The sample comprised 100 women, out of which 50 were employed and 50 were unemployed, selected based on defined inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Sample Size

A total of 100 participants were included in the study:

- 50 employed women
- 50 unemployed women

Sampling Technique

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select participants based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study.

Criteria for Selection of Samples

Inclusion Criteria

1. Women who are either employed or unemployed and willing to participate in stress reduction activities.
2. Women who provide informed consent for participation.
3. Adult women aged between 20 to 50 years.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Women with diagnosed mental health disorders or currently undergoing treatment for stress-related conditions.
2. Women who have prior formal training or experience in practicing PMRT or mindfulness techniques, as prior exposure may influence the outcome.

RESULT

Description of demographic variables of the women

1. Age Distribution

The age distribution shows that a majority of both employed and unemployed women fall within the 25–30 years age group, with 40% of employed women and 38% of unemployed women in this category. This is followed by the 30–35 years group, where 30% of employed and 26% of unemployed women were recorded. The representation of younger women (20–25 years) is slightly higher among unemployed women (16%) compared to employed women (10%). This pattern suggests that the majority of participants in both groups are in early adulthood, a period often associated with higher responsibilities, increased workloads, and the potential for psychological stress.

2. Educational Qualification

Educational qualifications differ significantly between the two groups. Among employed women, 60% had attained graduation or above, whereas only 20% of unemployed women held similar qualifications. In contrast, a considerable percentage of unemployed women had only completed senior secondary school (40%), and 10% were illiterate—unlike employed women, among whom none were illiterate. This suggests a clear positive relationship between higher educational attainment and employment status, highlighting the role of education as a key enabler of job opportunities and potentially influencing coping mechanisms for stress.

3. Marital Status

Marital status data revealed that a large proportion of both employed and unemployed women were married, accounting for 70% and 80% respectively. Divorcees represented 16% among employed women and 10% among unemployed, while widows accounted for 10% and 6%, respectively. The remaining 4% in both groups fell into the "Other" category, which may include single or separated women. These findings indicate that most women in both groups manage family responsibilities, with a slightly higher rate of marital disruption among employed women, possibly due to financial independence or changing social dynamics.

4. Monthly Family Income

In terms of monthly family income, the most common income bracket for both groups was Rs. 10,001 to 20,000, with 42% of employed women and 40% of unemployed women falling into this range. However, a slightly higher percentage of unemployed women (34%) reported income between Rs.

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E ISSN: 2097-1494

20,001 to 30,000 compared to 30% of employed women. Additionally, 16% of unemployed women earned less than Rs. 10,000 per month, compared to 12% of employed women. This indicates that unemployed women may be more financially vulnerable, which could be a contributing factor to stress.

5. Type of Family

Family type distribution shows that 60% of employed women belonged to nuclear families, while 40% lived in joint families. In comparison, 80% of unemployed women lived in nuclear families, with only 20% in joint families. The higher proportion of unemployed women in nuclear households may indicate limited family support, which could influence their ability to manage household responsibilities and cope with stress effectively.

6. Habit of Practicing Healthy Activities

A significant difference was observed in the practice of healthy activities between the two groups. Among employed women, 76% reported engaging in healthy activities, such as yoga, exercise, or relaxation techniques, compared to only 40% of unemployed women. This suggests that employed women are more inclined toward health-conscious behavior, possibly due to better access to information or structured routines that promote wellness.

7. Perception of Stress in Life

The majority of both groups reported experiencing stress in their lives. A higher percentage was noted among employed women (96%) compared to unemployed women (90%). While stress is clearly prevalent in both groups, the slightly higher percentage among employed women could be attributed to work-related pressures, dual responsibilities, and time constraints associated with balancing career and household roles.

8. Sources of Previous Information About Stress

When analyzing the sources of previous information regarding stress and its management, employed women most commonly cited newspapers and magazines (44%) as their source, followed by television/radio and healthcare professionals (20% each). On the other hand, unemployed women relied more heavily on family and friends (40%), with lesser engagement with professional or print media sources. This contrast indicates that employed women tend to access formal sources of health information, while unemployed women may depend more on informal and interpersonal communication networks.

Level of stress among employed women and unemployed women

Table no. 2: level of stress among employed and unemployed women

	Level of Stress	**Employed women**		**Unemployed women**	
		Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Mild (< 50%)	02	04%	30	60%
	Moderate (50 to 65%)	08	16%	14	28%

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E ISSN: 2097-1494

	Severe (>65%)	40	80%	06	12%

The findings in Table No. 2 clearly demonstrate a marked difference in the level of stress between employed and unemployed women.

Among the employed women, the vast majority, 80%, experienced severe stress (>65%), indicating that high stress levels are extremely common within this group. Only 16% of employed women exhibited moderate stress (50–65%), and a very small proportion, just 4%, reported mild stress (<50%). This highlights that stress among employed women is predominantly severe in nature, likely due to the combined pressures of professional responsibilities, work-life balance challenges, and household duties.

In contrast, the unemployed women showed a very different stress profile. A significant 60% of unemployed women were found to have mild stress, suggesting that the majority of this group experiences lower stress levels. 28% of unemployed women had moderate stress, while only 12% reported experiencing severe stress.

The data thus indicate that employed women are much more prone to severe stress compared to their unemployed counterparts, who generally experience lower levels of stress. This suggests that employment status is strongly associated with the degree of stress experienced by women, with employment contributing notably to higher stress levels.

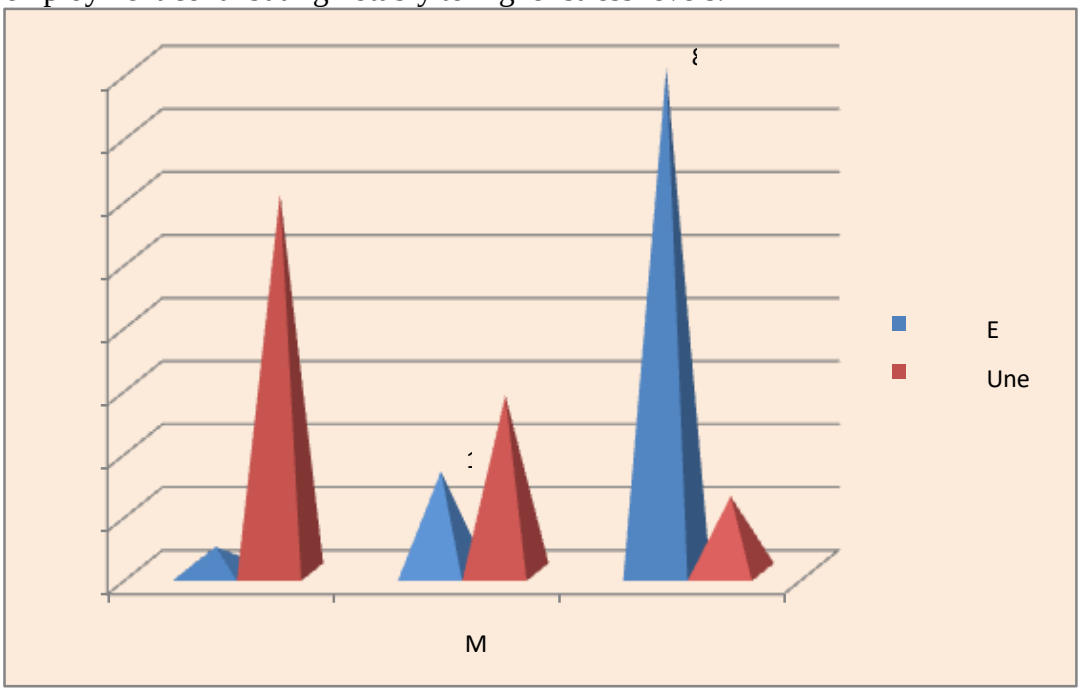

Fig. 1: Cylindrical diagram showing level of stress of employed women and unemployed women

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Comparison of progressive muscular relaxation technique and mindfulness breathing on stress level among employed women and unemployed women

Table No. 3: Level of Stress and its management Score

S. No.	Aspect of stress	Max. Score	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Coefficient variance
1.	Employed women	27	45.52	43	2.54	5.99%
2.	Unemployed women	26	26.22	26.5	4.65	17.81%

Table No. 3 presents the comparison of stress levels and the effectiveness of stress management techniques — Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing among employed and unemployed women.

Among the employed women, the maximum stress score was 27, with a mean score of 45.52 and a median of 43. The standard deviation was 2.54, indicating that the stress scores were closely clustered around the mean, showing little variability. The coefficient of variation was calculated at 5.99%, reflecting low relative variability and suggesting that stress levels among employed women were consistently high, even after intervention. This indicates that while PMRT and mindfulness breathing may have helped to some extent, the overall reduction in stress among employed women remained limited.

For unemployed women, the maximum stress score was 26, with a mean score of 26.22 and a median of 26.5. The standard deviation was 4.65, showing a greater spread in stress scores compared to employed women. The coefficient of variation was 17.81%, indicating higher relative variability in stress levels after the intervention among unemployed women. This suggests that the stress management techniques were more effective and produced greater reduction and variation in stress levels in the unemployed group compared to the employed group.

Overall, the table shows that although both groups benefited from the interventions, unemployed women exhibited a better reduction in stress levels and more variability in response, while employed women maintained consistently higher stress scores with less variation even after practicing PMRT and mindfulness breathing.

Fig. 2: Column Diagram Showing Mean Median, SD and coefficient variance of level of stress

Table no. 4: Level of Stress and its management by PMRT and mindfulness breathing Score

S. No.	Aspect of stress	Max. Score	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Coefficient variance
1.	Employed women	27	17.28	17	3.26	18.87%
2.	Unemployed women	27	20.58	20	4.52	21.97%

Table No. 4 presents the post-intervention stress scores after practicing Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing among employed and unemployed women.

For the employed women, the maximum stress score was 27, with a mean score of 17.28 and a median of 17. The standard deviation was 3.26, indicating a moderate spread of scores around the mean. The coefficient of variation was calculated as 18.87%, which shows a moderate level of variability among the stress scores after intervention. This suggests that there was a notable reduction in stress levels among employed women following PMRT and mindfulness breathing, and there was moderate consistency in the degree of improvement across participants.

In the case of unemployed women, the maximum stress score was 27, with a mean score of 20.58 and a median of 20. The standard deviation was 4.52, slightly higher compared to the employed group, indicating a wider distribution of stress scores among unemployed women. The coefficient of variation

was 21.97%, reflecting greater relative variability in stress reduction outcomes for unemployed women after the intervention.

Overall, the data suggest that both employed and unemployed women showed a substantial decrease in their stress levels after the intervention with PMRT and mindfulness breathing. However, employed women achieved a slightly lower mean stress score (17.28) compared to unemployed women (20.58), implying a relatively better reduction in stress among employed participants. The slightly higher variability in unemployed women indicates that while some benefited greatly, others had less pronounced improvements.

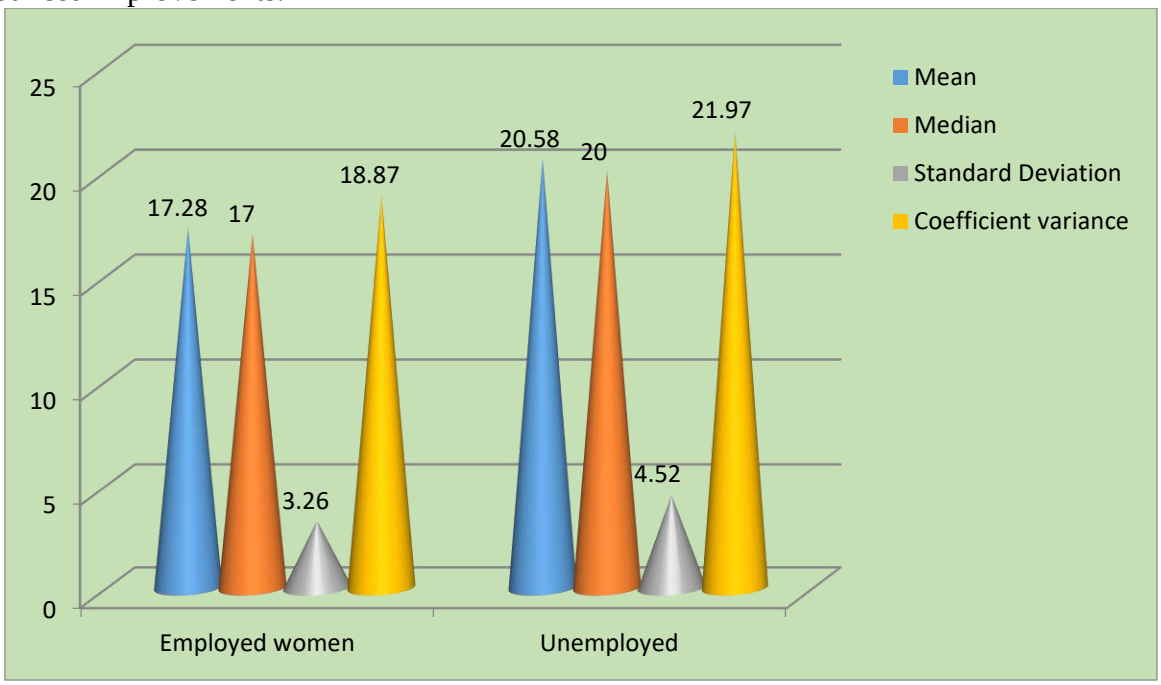

Fig. 5: Cone Diagram Showing Mean Median, SD and coefficient variance of level of stress

Table no. 5: Mean, Median, SD, and coefficient variance Value of employed women and unemployed women by using PMRT and mindfulness breathing

S. NO.	Aspect of Stress	Mean	Median	SD	Coefficient variance
1.	Employed women	12.3	12	1.43	11.64
2.	Unemployed women	8.48	8	2.18	25.75

Table No. 5 presents the final comparison of stress reduction scores after the implementation of Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing among employed and unemployed women.

For employed women, the mean stress score after intervention was 12.3, with a median of 12. The standard deviation (SD) was 1.43, indicating a very small spread of scores around the mean. The coefficient of variation was 11.64%, suggesting that there was low variability among the employed women's stress scores post-intervention. This demonstrates that the majority of employed women had a consistent and significant reduction in stress levels after using PMRT and mindfulness breathing.
Among unemployed women, the mean stress score was 8.48, with a median of 8. The standard deviation was 2.18, slightly higher than that of employed women, indicating greater dispersion around the mean. The coefficient of variation was 25.75%, showing higher relative variability in the stress scores of unemployed women after the intervention. This suggests that while unemployed women overall had lower final stress scores than employed women, the effectiveness of the stress management techniques varied more widely within this group.
In summary, both groups benefited from PMRT and mindfulness breathing. However, the unemployed women achieved a lower average stress score (8.48) compared to employed women (12.3), indicating greater absolute stress reduction. Yet, the consistency of improvement was better among employed women, as reflected by their lower coefficient of variation.

Association between effect of PMRT and mindfulness breathing on stress level among unemployed women with selected demographic variables.

The association between stress levels and selected demographic variables among unemployed women after PMRT and mindfulness breathing showed that educational qualification, marital status, monthly family income, type of family, habit of practicing healthy activities, perception of stress, and sources of previous information had a significant association with stress levels. Only age was found to have no significant association. This indicates that factors such as education, income, family type, and healthy habits influence how unemployed women manage stress after interventions, whereas age did not significantly impact the stress outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to assess and compare the stress levels between employed and unemployed women and to evaluate the effectiveness of Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing in managing their stress. The findings of the present study revealed a marked difference in the levels of stress between employed and unemployed women. Among employed women, a vast majority (80%) experienced severe stress (>65%), whereas among unemployed women, only 12% had severe stress. On the contrary, 60% of unemployed women had mild stress levels, highlighting that stress was much more prevalent and severe among employed women. These findings align closely with the study conducted by Srinivasa S. (2021), where employed women reported significantly higher mean stress scores compared to unemployed women, with a highly significant t-value ($p<0.001$).[13] Similarly, the study by Joseph JK and Devu BK (2019) supported the finding that employed women have a higher prevalence of stress compared to non-working women.
In addition to these observations, the present study also measured stress reduction after interventions using PMRT and Mindfulness Breathing. The analysis showed that both groups benefited from the interventions, but the response varied between employed and unemployed women. Initially, unemployed women demonstrated greater absolute reductions in stress scores post-intervention. However, employed women exhibited more consistency in their improvement, with a lower coefficient of variation after intervention, suggesting that their stress reduction was more uniform. These findings are partially supported by the study conducted by Kamlesh Dubey (2021), which

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showed that although employed women experience higher stress initially, they develop better stress management capabilities over time compared to non-working women. Dubey's study demonstrated that employed women had a significantly higher mean stress management score, indicating better coping mechanisms.[15]

Furthermore, the present study's intervention outcomes resonate strongly with the findings of Maqbool Kermane M. (2016), who explored the effectiveness of PMRT and mindfulness breathing among employed women. In Kermane's study, it was evident that without intervention, stress levels remained high among the control group, with no significant post-test improvement. However, in the experimental group where PMRT and mindfulness breathing were applied, a significant reduction in stress was noted, from a mean pre-test score of 66.92 to a mean post-test score of 29.76, with a highly significant t-value ($p<0.05$). This parallels the present study, where substantial decreases in stress levels were noted post-intervention among both employed and unemployed women, with slightly better final outcomes in unemployed women but more consistent reductions among employed women.[16]

The association between stress levels and selected demographic variables was also examined in the present study. It was found that factors such as educational qualification, marital status, monthly family income, type of family, habit of practicing healthy activities, perception of stress, and sources of previous information had a statistically significant association with stress levels among unemployed women after intervention, whereas age was not significantly associated. These results are consistent with the broader literature indicating that socioeconomic status, lifestyle habits, and family structure play crucial roles in influencing stress management outcomes, as reflected in various studies including those by Srinivasa S., Kamlesh Dubey, and Maqbool Kermane.

Comparing the findings across all supporting studies, a consistent pattern emerges: employed women are exposed to higher stress levels compared to non-working women. However, when provided with effective stress management interventions like PMRT and mindfulness breathing, employed women show the capacity for consistent and substantial stress reduction. This highlights the dual role of employment: while it increases the stress burden due to additional professional and domestic responsibilities, it also seems to foster resilience and improved stress-handling skills over time when appropriate coping mechanisms are introduced.

CONCLUSION

The present study emphasizes the critical importance of understanding stress dynamics among women, particularly in relation to their employment status. It highlights the necessity of recognizing the unique stressors faced by employed and unemployed women and the need for tailored stress management interventions. The use of Progressive Muscular Relaxation Technique (PMRT) and Mindfulness Breathing practices emerged as valuable approaches to support women's mental well-being.

This research underlines that promoting simple, accessible, and evidence-based relaxation techniques can be an effective strategy to enhance coping mechanisms among women from different backgrounds. Moreover, demographic factors such as education, income, marital status, and lifestyle practices play an influential role in determining stress experiences, suggesting that interventions must be designed considering the socio-demographic context of the target population.

Overall, this study contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between employment status and stress among women and advocates for the integration of structured stress management programs at the community level to foster resilience, mental health, and overall quality of life.

Conflict of Interest: The authors certify that they have no involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this paper.
Funding Source: "There is no funding Source for this study"

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