



Stress Environmental Disease and Status of Women in Service Sector: An Empirical Study in Assam

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Abstract

When the people especially women section face such situations as torture for dowry, molestation, rape, kidnapping and eve teasing, then simply it is called stress environment. It has been observed that there is continuous rise in total incidents of crime against women folk, in particular, over the years. Consequently, women and children in particular are facing psychological and behavior related problems in their daily life. Psychological problems/diseases like anxiety, fear, sadness, depression, sleeplessness and physical problems such as high blood pressure, stomach upset, muscular tension, dryness of mouth, nervous break down now a days have become serious threats in the process of sustainable development of human being. The main objectives of the study is to examine whether (i) the service sector women feel less stress in terms of social, mental, physical, mental-physical and financial matters/areas; and (ii) the service sector women are more secure than the housewives in terms of stress environmental diseases. This paper is prepared by using both Primary and Secondary data. It is expected that the outcome of this paper will be an important document in making proper policy and to form a mechanism to extend social sustainability in the era of knowledge economy.

Keywords: Stress Environment, Social Sustainability, Social Environment, Sustainable Development, Knowledge Economy.

Introduction

There is no change for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. Swami Vivekananda.

Stress Environmental Disease: The term “Stress Environment” and “Stress Environmental Disease” cannot be defined straight. With the development of society, the responsibility and accountability of the common people have been increasing and in that process the activities of human beings affect directly or indirectly in our social environment. Social environment is nothing but a part of social sustainability which includes individual freedom, participation, community cohesion, health care and maintenance of law and order. When the people especially women section face such situations as torture for dowry, molestation, rape, kidnapping and eve teasing, then simply it is called stress environment¹. It has been observed that there is continuous rise in total incidents of crime against women folk in particular during last few years. Incidence of torture and molestation tops the list followed by the cases of kidnapping and rape. A number of these incidences were not reported to the public authority or the guardians². In such cases the role of media is to portray positive images consistent with human dignity of girls and women³. But it is not so in practical life. Consequently, women and children in particular are facing psychological and behavioural problems in their daily life. Psychological problems/diseases like- anxiety, fear, sadness, depression, sleeplessness and physical problems such as high blood pressure, stomach upset, muscular tension, dryness of mouth, nervous break down now a days have become a serious

threats in the process of sustainable development of human being.

How women are suffering from Stress Environmental Disease?: Women constitute one of the elegant resources of society and possess dynamic source of power. They comprise the very backbone of a family with multiple roles of a mother, a wife, a pretty sister and a host of others. It is observed that the volume of violence has not only escalated, instance of police atrocities, torture and lawlessness are mounting. Gender violence as a critical concern includes violence, rape, wife beating, sexual harassment at work place and in public places, degrading portrayal of women in media, sex determination tests leading to abortion and feticides, dowry murders, and so on ‘it is a long list’⁴. A disappointed boy punishes his girlfriend by throwing acid on her face, because she refused to marry him.

Table-1
Crime against Women

Nature of Crime	Assam		India	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
Molestation	850	338	34124	34175
kidnapping	1070	535	14645	15750
Rape	785	613	16075	18359
Cruelty by Husband/Torture	1248	1069	49170	58319
Dowry	59	35	6851	6768
Total	4012	2590	120865	133371

Source: The Times of India, 21st August, 2007 and The Assam Tribune, 2nd October, 2005

A lower caste girl is raped because she dared to think of marrying an upper caste boy. Gang rape is another form of violence which has been increasing now –a-days. Similarly when the bride has not brought ‘enough’ dowry she is pushed through insults and beatings, forcing her to leave the matrimonial home or else to face death. The following table reflects the crime that took place against women in recent years which ultimately gives birth to some stress environmental problems and diseases.

The table-1 has showed the statistics of crime against women in Assam and India respectively. It is seen that the number of such cases has been in increasing drift in India but it is shrinking marginally in the state of Assam. Thus, it is observed and obvious that the women section of the society in particular have been suffering from different stress environmental problems and diseases specially with respect to social, mental, physical, mental-physical and financial substances.

A Woman is Women only above her waist and below her waist there dwells unquenchable sexual desire. William Shakespeare

Women are victimized only: It is well known that in the wake of liberalization new ideas and ways of living have been introduced. Blind consumerism, unreal aspiration and get rich quick schemes have influenced the way people think and behave. The growing gap between the aspirations and their fulfillment is also responsible for increased violence in human interactions. Obviously in such situation women have become more vulnerable. Again in a patriarchal society women are always considered as weak, subordinate section of society, they easily become the target of any form of aggression like-rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, custodian violence etc.

Objectives: The main objectives of the study is to examine whether: i. the service sector women feel less stress in terms of social, mental, physical, mental-physical and financial related

disease; and ii. the service sector women are more secure than the housewives in terms of stress environmental diseases;

Delimitation: i. the proposed study focus only on the female section of the society, ii. our main concern is social, mental, physical, mental-physical and financial related disease, iii. for the proposed study, 70 samples selected from which 50 samples are engaged in service sector and remaining 20 samples are housewives, iv. the study is based on southern part of Assam.

Hypothesis: Service sector women are more secure than the housewives in terms of stress environmental diseases.

Methodology

As there is dearth of data regarding the different aspects of the proposed study, the study is exploratory in nature and is dependent upon field survey. The investigator employed random sampling method. A sample of 70 women was selected from different districts of southern part of Assam. We also drew upon electronic and print media for our analysis. For collecting relevant and necessary data, a self-designed questionnaire was employed by the investigator. The study was conducted under normative survey method. Apart from the above cited step, some other questions were also discussed orally relating to our topic with our selected samples and with some other women which helped us in preparing the paper.

Results and Discussion

The various information or data that we gathered from our survey are discussed in the form of results and findings below. For our convenient and easy understanding of the findings we present table-2 as shown in below.

Thus the general findings that we gathered during the study period are enlisted below:

**Table-2
 Information from Respondent**

Sl No.	particulars	Organized			Unorganized			Housewives
		M	U.M	T	M	U.M	T	
01	Total Respondent	18	12	30	06	14	20	20
02	Mental Disease Feel in No.	04	05	09	04	13	17	15
03	Social Stress Feel in No.	03	07	10	03	06	09	12
04	Financial Stress Feel in No.	00	00	00	06	11	17	16
05	Physical Illness Feel in No.	05	09	14	04	09	13	10
06	Physical-Mental Stress Feel in No.	06	09	15	05	10	15	13
07	No. of Cases Registered	00	00	00	00	00	00	00
08	No. of Feeling Secured Condition	10	07	17	02	01	03	08
09	No. of Feeling Job Satisfaction	14	10	24	02	04	06	00

Source: Field survey
 (M- Married; U.M- Unmarried; T-Total)

From our sample it is clear that those who work in private sector face some physical problems like- high blood pressure, muscular tension, nervous break down etc. due to the duration of working hour. No doubt there is a maximum limit of working time, but in actual practice it is not adhered to in the private sector. They have to fulfill their target in very limited time period which is very complicated for them. Ultimately to fulfill their target they do more work which physically disturbs them and at the same time this becomes a mental problem too. In case of unorganised sector it is found that physical illness is 65 percent but for housewives it is 50 percent and 47 percent for unmarried workers. Here we found that unorganised women are more victimized.

It is also found that both married and unmarried women workers experience mental stress like- anxiety, fear, sadness, depression, sleeplessness etc. on account of the distance between their working place and their residence and because of growing violence against women. Women face not only occupational hazards but also other forms of overt and covert harassment including sexual harassment. They also suffer from mental agony and psychological stress and strain⁵. A number of female workers can't stay in the surrounding area of their working place either due to financial problem (private worker) or threat/feeling of insecurity being a female worker. From our survey it is evident that 30 percent organised workers have the experience of mental harassment in organised sector, 85 percent in unorganised sector and 75 percent in housewives sectors. Here it is found that unmarried section of both organised (41.6%) and unorganised (92.85%) sectors face the same problems.

In our survey it is found that apart from educational sector the employment of female is far behind compared to their male counterpart. So if they face some problem they can't express it either due to status related problem or low bargaining power of them. For example, when a male worker takes a cigarette/wine/drugs within the work place it may disturb the situation due to its smoke and smell but in such a situation both male and female workers face mental problem especially those who are not familiar with such environment. Thus, the air that man breathes goes into direct contact with the most sensitive organs of human body-the respiratory tract and the lungs⁶.

Compared to housewives the working women (both in private and public sectors) feel that they are financially strong. But in terms of sustainability of income level the capacity of a government service holder is more than the private workers. As example in our sample it is found that 85 percent workers of unorganised sector face financial problems whereas the organised sections do not. Here we observe that married workers of unorganised and housewife sectors are affected highly.

It is also found that housewives are less physically burdened than the service holder women workers in terms of work load.

Because it is well known to us that a service cum housewife worker need to take the additional responsibility of the family.

Another important finding that of our study is that unmarried female workers are beleaguered highly in terms of gesture and speech as reported by most of the female worker from our samples.

The married female workers generally don't have the experience of being strained during their work time in their office as reported by our respondents. But those who are only housewives or both (service holder plus housewives) have the experience of mental provocation or physical assault at the hand of their husband or family members.

Maximum service holder female respondents expressed that they are not in favour of staying alone at a distance from their family members. They feel that it is not safe for them (both married and unmarried). As a result their physical irritation in the form travel and cost in terms of mental and financial stress increases.

Validity of Hypothesis: So with reference to our observations and discussion we may conclude that our hypothesis is correct for physical illness in organised sector but not for physical illness in the unorganised; it is correct for mental disease in organised sector but not for mental disease in unorganised sector; it is correct for physical-mental related problems in organised sector but not for physical-mental related problems in un-organised sector; in respect of social stress it is correct for both organised and unorganised sector and; financially it is correct for both organised and unorganised but not for housewives.

Conclusion

Thus we may draw the conclusion that it is the need of the hour to take the situation seriously at least in order to uplift this section of people in our society. It is very important that women are involved as equal partners in tackling environmental issues recognizing their knowledge and experience⁷. For this purpose apart from the corrective measures it is highly essential for us to change the attitude of the common citizen so that the factors creating unsocial activities can be checked out. It's a big challenge for the modern society to identify and use a correct approach to minimize the problems. A new idea of social sustainability should be developed based on the principle of cooperation to protect this section of women from violations as well as from stress related disease. A new protective strategy in contemporary society has to be developed at different levels to fight against this stigma. The concept of social sustainability embodying individual freedom, health care and maintenance of law and order needs to be initiated effectively. As individuals and responsible citizens, we need to spread awareness and report any act of violence against women around us⁸. Then only one can save the life from environmental stress related disease.

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