

## Empowering Mothers: Enhancing Stress Management through Life Skill Training

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### Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of life skills training in managing stress among working mothers. A total of 100 working mothers (Age range: 25-35) with moderate to high levels of stress (scores ranging from 150 to 299 on the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale) were included in the study. The intervention group attended a training program comprising five 2 hours sessions per week for five consecutive weeks. The stress levels of mothers significantly decreased after the training sessions. The mean and SD total stress scores decreased significantly in the intervention group immediately after the intervention, highlighting the positive impact of training on reducing stress levels among mothers. Employers, healthcare providers, and community organizations should consider offering life skill training as a regular component of their wellness programs. As more working mothers gain access to effective stress management tools, the overall mental health of this demographic could improve, potentially reducing healthcare costs associated with stress-related conditions.

**Keywords:** *Life Skill Training, Stress Management, Working Mothers, Empowerment.*

### Introduction:

As the number of employed women has increased over the past several decades, women have reached parity with their male counterparts in many fields. However, stress has become an inevitable and unavoidable issue, particularly in the service sector. A study shows that 28% of men and 53% of women report experiencing work-family stress, which affects their ability to concentrate on their jobs.

Stress is a significant challenge for college teachers and their institutions. In the education sector, stress mainly stems from excessive work pressure and poor work-life balance. Organizations should support and encourage employees to take on roles that help them balance work and family responsibilities (Diksha Garg & Kavita Rani, 2014).

Present study found that the stress levels of working women are high, whereas non-working women experience lower stress levels. Unlike non-working women, working women must also fulfill the role of homemaker, leading to increased

stress. Women are still primarily responsible for household labor, childcare, and elder care, effectively working the equivalent of two full-time jobs. This dual burden strains their time and energy. Research has shown that more daily juggling incidents correlate with lower satisfaction and higher stress levels (Williams & Suls, 1991). Additionally, women who do not receive spousal support in household management experience even higher stress levels (Repetti et al., 1989).

Stress is an unavoidable part of day-to-day living. Our study confirms that working women face higher stress levels compared to non-working women (Shruti Shukla, 2017). Over the last few decades, psychological stress has significantly increased due to changes in the physical and socio-cultural environment and lifestyle. Other contributing factors include working style, management objectives, work environment, and work hours.

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The study "Empowering Mothers: Enhancing Stress Management through Life Skill Training" is of paramount significance in contemporary society. Mothers often face immense stress due to their dual roles in managing household responsibilities and professional obligations. This research aims to address this critical issue by providing effective stress management strategies through life skill training. Improving stress management skills can significantly enhance the mental health and well-being of mothers, reducing anxiety, depression, and other stress-related health problems. Additionally, it promotes a healthier work-life balance, enabling mothers to navigate their personal and professional lives more effectively. This not only benefits the mothers themselves but also positively impacts family dynamics, contributing to more harmonious family environments. Furthermore, empowering mothers with these skills supports broader socioeconomic development, as healthier and more balanced individuals contribute positively to the economy and society. The study also provides valuable evidence-based interventions for organizations, healthcare providers, and policymakers, informing the development of programs and policies that support mothers in managing stress. Ultimately, the research aims to enhance community well-being by enabling mothers to participate more actively and effectively in their communities.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Monika Mittal (2018) found that role overload significantly impacts job stress, as women juggle multiple roles within their families and workplaces. This often leads to fatigue, stress, and dissatisfaction, negatively affecting job satisfaction.

B. Vasavi (2018) and Makowska (1995) highlighted that work-related stressors are more significant than family-related ones for working women. Essien and Stephen (2014) noted that annual leave and assistance from colleagues are common stress-coping strategies among female bank employees in Nigeria. Dhanabakyam and Malarvizhi (2014) observed a positive relationship between stress and family difficulties, with work-family conflict increasing stress among married working women. Khetarpal and Kochar (2006) identified poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, and under-participation as major stressors for women.

Studies on bank employees revealed high-stress levels among private and non-nationalized bank employees. Faculty job stress research showed that senior professors and self-financing college teachers experience high-stress levels. Nair examined role stressors among women executives and found a significant correlation between inter-role distance and defensive coping styles.

Sindu and Satyamoorthy (2014) identified role conflict, role ambiguity, and work-family conflict as stressors for women managers in India. They recommended stress management programs, career planning, and job redesign to reduce stress, supported by Kodavatiganti and Bulusu (2011). High stress levels can lead to physical, psychological, and behavioral issues, with women reporting more non-fatal but long-term health problems, according to Jindal (2016), and Srivastava & Gupta (2018). Female educators face higher stress levels than their male counterparts due to long working hours, inadequate resources, and overcrowded classrooms. Tomba and Rapheileng (2013) found that female entrepreneurs experience more stress than males, particularly regarding time with family and childcare.

Dr. Hemanalini (2014) investigated stress causes in the textile industry, finding job insecurity and high targets as major stressors for women. Ansuman, Adithya, and Madhulita (2014) determined that poor mental health among women is influenced by home and workplace environments, with married women experiencing more stress than unmarried women due to societal demands and multiple roles. Bakshi et al. (2008) stated that high occupational stress affects women's ability

to manage household duties. Abirami (2011) identified balancing family and work, low monetary benefits, and safety concerns as stress factors for working women.

Rajasekhar and Sasikala (2013) concluded that stress management involves understanding stress, utilizing it productively, and developing coping strategies. Dhanabhakya and Anitha (2011) found that managing daily home activities and family care are personal stress sources, while organizational stress comes from developmental opportunities, transportation facilities, and recognition of hard work.

Deepthi and Janghel (2015) discussed coping strategies, noting that employed women often use self-distraction techniques. Balaji (2014) found that work-family conflict and stress among married women are due to long working hours, flexible or inflexible schedules, family size, and dependents. Sussanna (2012) linked high psychological demands, job strain, and low job control to increased stroke risk in working women. Bhuvaneshwari (2013) noted that family and work commitments, workplace harassment, long hours, and poor work-life balance cause stress, leading to health issues like headaches, hypertension, and obesity. She suggested that balancing work and family, institutional support, and physical exercise can alleviate stress.

Stephen (2005) identified work overload, uncooperative patients, criticism, negligent co-workers, lack of supervisor support, and difficulties with physicians as stress factors for nurses, recommending interventions to improve job performance. Dr. A. Chandra, Balaji, and Kishore (2015) found that married female employees experience higher stress levels, with no significant relationship between self-esteem and stress. Ramanaiah and Subramanian (2008) reported high stress levels among gold-collar employees in Chennai, with a negative relationship between marital status and stress, and concluded that stress among female employees is due to role isolation, inter-role distance, and role overload.

### **Methodology:**

#### **Objectives**

- To identify the level of stress among working mothers.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of stress management through life skill training among working mothers.

#### **Hypothesis**

- Life Skill Training will significantly reduce stress among working mothers and also will be an important training for stress management

#### **Research Design**

The study utilized a before-and-after research design to conceptualize the study and analyze the data. Scores of the subjects before and after therapy were compared using a t-test to determine the effectiveness of the life skill training to manage the stress of working mothers.

#### **Sample**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of life skill training to manage their stress. 4 Multinational Companies in Delhi were contacted, and respondents were selected using quota sampling. Initially, 150 working mothers in Delhi, India, were chosen through this method. Ultimately, a total of 100 working mothers (Age range: 25-35) with moderate to high levels of stress (scores ranging from 150 to 299 on the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale) were included in the study.

#### **Tool Used:**

Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale (1967) is to measure an individual's stress level based on the impact of various life events. By assigning numerical values to different stressful life events, the scale helps assess the cumulative stress experienced by an individual over a specific period. can be used to identify potential stress triggers, gauge overall stress levels, and provide insights into how stressors in different areas of life may be affecting an individual's well-being. This information can then be used to develop strategies to cope with and manage stress effectively.

### **Training Used:**

Life skill Training offers working mothers a valuable toolkit for navigating the complexities of modern life while safeguarding their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. These programs provide practical strategies for managing stress, balancing responsibilities, and fostering healthy relationships. By investing in such training programs, organizations, communities, and policymakers demonstrate a commitment to supporting the holistic health and success of working mothers. Empowering mothers with essential life skills not only benefits individual well-being but also contributes to the creation of a healthier, more resilient society. As mothers thrive in their personal and professional lives, they set positive examples for their families and communities, inspiring others to prioritize self-care and resilience-building practices. Ultimately, this collective investment in the well-being of working mothers lays the foundation for a more prosperous and harmonious society.

### **Procedure:**

The researcher explained the aims and methods of the study to the participants during an orientation session, assuring them of the anonymity and confidentiality of their data. After obtaining written informed consent, those willing to participate filled out a demographic questionnaire. Participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded. Those in the intervention group then completed the stress questionnaire.

### **Pre- Test Phase:**

Participants were informed about the objectives of the study in advance. They were then given a stress questionnaire and instructed to respond to all the questions. After all the mothers completed the questionnaire, each response was scored to determine the stress level of each participant.

### **Intervention Phase:**

The intervention group attended a training program comprising five two-hour sessions per week for five consecutive weeks. The sessions, designed based on guidelines from the WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund, covered the following topics:

- **Session One:** Teaching self-awareness skills, including the importance of self-awareness, self-esteem, types of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and characteristics of self-aware individuals.
- **Session Two:** Teaching techniques for coping with emotions, focusing on understanding emotions, strategies for coping with anger, and techniques for assertiveness and decisiveness.
- **Session Three:** Teaching stress coping skills, including the definition of stress, the relationship between stress and individual characteristics, the adverse effects and symptoms of psychological stress, and stress management techniques.
- **Session Four:** Teaching problem-solving and decision-making skills, covering creative and critical thinking, the importance of problem-solving, defining and solving problems, making decisions, consulting, and managing positive and negative thoughts.
- **Session Five:** Teaching empathy and interpersonal relationship skills, focusing on the importance and techniques of empathy, obstacles to empathy, the outcomes of empathetic behavior, effective communication skills, and principles of correct communication, particularly with a blind child.

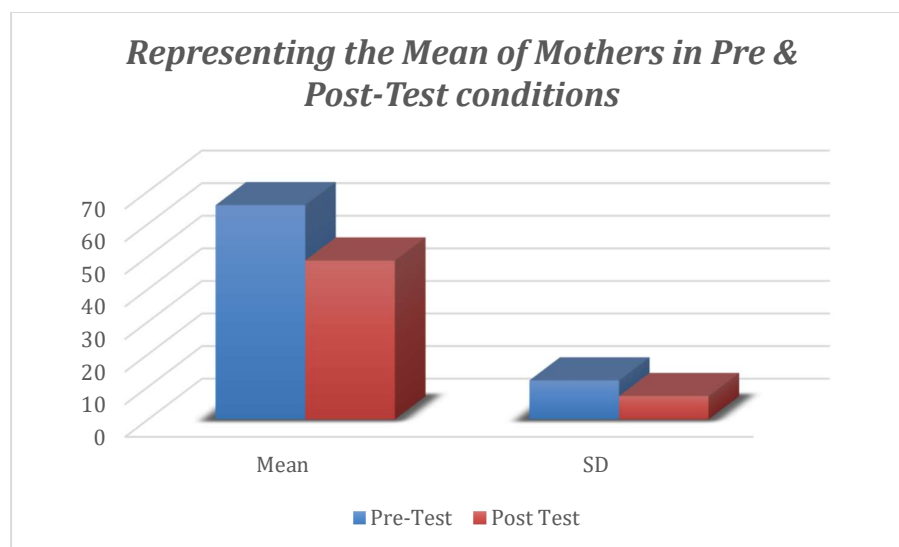
### **Post-Test Phase:**

After 5 weeks, all the mothers were given the same stress scale to complete again. Their stress levels were calculated, and the pre-test and post-test scores were statistically analyzed using a t-test to determine the significance of the difference between the two means.

### **Results:**

Conditions	Mean	SD	t value	Level of Significance
Pre-Test	65.68	11.94	10.11	*
Post Test	48.7	7.13		

\*= *Significant at .05*



### Discussion:

From Table 1 and Graph 1, it is evident that the stress level among mothers before the intervention (pre-test) was 65.68, which was higher than the post-test score of 48.7. When these scores were analysed using a t-test, a value of 10.11 was obtained, indicating a significant difference. Thus, the hypothesis that "Life Skill Training will significantly reduce the level of stress among mothers" was accepted. The stress levels of mothers significantly decreased after the life skill training sessions. Studying the effects of the LST program on stress, we found that the mean  $\pm$  SD total stress score decreased significantly in the intervention group immediately after the intervention, reflecting the positive effect of training on decreasing the stress levels of the mothers. These results are supported by Buddeberg-Fischer (2008), who found that yogic practices significantly reduce job stress. Similarly, Deuskar (2011) corroborates these findings. Dwivedi, Awasthi, and Pandey (2011) studied the effect of yoga nidra and pranayama on alpha brain waves and found that mindfulness and yoga nidra increased alpha waves on alpha EEG biofeedback. Singh, P., & Singh, S. (2012). "Impact of Life Skill Education on Stress Levels in Working Women." This research highlights the positive impact of life skill education on reducing stress levels among working women, making it an important intervention for stress management. Verma, S., & Aggarwal, A. (2015). "The Role of Life Skills Training in Stress Management for Working Mothers." Their findings support the effectiveness of life skills training in helping working mothers manage and reduce stress. Sharma, S., & Rani, P. (2013). "Life Skills Training: A Strategy for Stress Management in Working Women." This study provides evidence that life skills training can significantly reduce stress levels in working women, including working mothers.

### Conclusion:

The stress levels of mothers significantly decreased after the life skill training sessions. Our study demonstrated a notable reduction in the mean total stress score in the intervention group immediately following the intervention, highlighting the

positive impact of life skill training on stress reduction among mothers. This decrease in stress levels underscores the effectiveness of life skill training programs in managing and alleviating stress. The findings are consistent with a body of research that supports the efficacy of life skill education, including techniques such as mindfulness and yoga nidra, in reducing stress. Life skills training encompasses a variety of strategies designed to enhance individuals' ability to cope with stress, improve emotional regulation, and foster resilience. For working mothers, who often juggle multiple responsibilities and experience higher levels of stress, such training can be particularly beneficial. The significant reduction in stress observed in our study participants illustrates the potential of life skill training as a crucial intervention for stress management. Incorporating life skill training into regular stress management programs could provide working mothers with practical tools to manage their stress more effectively, leading to improved overall well-being and productivity.

#### **Recommendation:**

Based on the significant reduction in stress levels observed among mothers who participated in life skill training sessions, it is recommended that such training programs be widely implemented and integrated into existing support systems for working mothers. Employers, healthcare providers, and community organizations should consider offering life skill training as a regular component of their wellness programs. This training should encompass a range of techniques, including mindfulness, emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills, tailored to address the unique challenges faced by working mothers. By providing these resources, organizations can help working mothers manage their stress more effectively, leading to improved mental health, greater job satisfaction, and enhanced productivity.

#### **Future Implications:**

The positive outcomes of this study suggest several future implications for both research and practice. Firstly, further studies could explore the long-term effects of life skill training on stress management among working mothers, assessing the sustainability of its benefits over time. Additionally, research could examine the impact of life skill training on other aspects of well-being, such as physical health, work-life balance, and parenting effectiveness. In practice, scaling up life skill training programs could have a broader societal impact. As more working mothers gain access to effective stress management tools, the overall mental health of this demographic could improve, potentially reducing healthcare costs associated with stress-related conditions. Moreover, children of mothers who effectively manage stress may benefit from more positive parenting and a healthier home environment, contributing to better developmental outcomes.

Collaborative efforts between policymakers, educational institutions, and employers to promote and fund life skill training initiatives could create a supportive ecosystem for working mothers. This approach would not only empower individual mothers but also foster a more resilient and productive workforce, ultimately benefiting society as a whole.

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