

## A comparative study of stress among working women

Kavita Kumari<sup>1</sup> and Bimla Dhanda<sup>2</sup>  
Ph.D. Scholar<sup>1</sup> and Professor<sup>2</sup>

Human Development and Family Studies, I.C. College of Home Sciences, CCS HAU, Hisar  
Email: k.bhakher93@gmail.com

---

**Abstract:** Families today are seeing rapid changes due to the increased pace of growth and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into various professions which cause stress in their personal and professional life. Women's exposure to educational opportunities is significantly higher than in urban areas. Working women with dual roles are leading to stress in their lives as still they perform most of the household chores including, child and elder care with equivalent to her full-time jobs. The double work pressure affects their life satisfaction, adjustment, happiness, and mental health. Women have been playing vital roles in households since ages but they had stress due to their multiple roles, discrimination, and stereotyping. The findings revealed significant differences in perceived stress ( $Z=2.76^*$ ) of rural and urban working women respectively. Results further revealed significant association of perceived stress with area, age, family type, family size, occupation of respondents, and occupation of spouse.

---

### Introduction:

Stress amongst working women becomes a serious problem due to the overburden of work at home or job. Some of the common reasons for working women's stress can be family problems, the workload in the home, as well as office, and family issues (Walker, 2005). Dealing with family issues as well as work issues has resulted in women dealing with an increasing amount of stress. It is also true that multiple roles are good for women's mental health. Generally, the employment has positive psychosocial effects on women either as a safe-guard against stress or as a primary source of well-being. In short, paid jobs help to reduce depression in life however working women may experience work-related stress that may lead to depression. Stress can be explained in terms of sadness, worries tension, and frustration leads to social interaction anxiety that is temporary or may last for long. Stress is a universal phenomenon; women may be different in degree and level of their experience (Blanco and Feldman, 2000). The degree of perceived stress can also be influenced by various factors such as personal and socioeconomic including place of residence, gender, age, income levels, education levels factors are the main determinants of psychological stress. But in urban working women with help of supporting partners who have taken on more domestic work than they did in earlier generations can reduce stress up to some extent.

### Review of Literature

Our family situations are entwined with stress and strains where strains where working women they have to cope up with all pressure at work as well as home. Sharma and Nair (2015) observed that managing the daily home activities, looking after the family members, and child care are identified as the sources of personal stress and the developmental opportunity provided by the management,

availability of transportation facility and recognition of hard work are identified as the major sources of organizational stress among working women. Ansuman et al., (2014) determined that the maximum number of women is suffering from poor mental health. According to them, the home and workplace atmosphere played a major role in deciding the mental health status of working women. Poor physical health causes more perceived stress. Balaji (2014) studied various factors that could lead to work-family conflict and the stress undergone by women employees. He concluded that married women employees experience work-family conflict due to the number of hours worked outside the home, flexible or inflexible working hours, size of the family, and several dependents of the family. These factors have severe consequences for the psychological distress and well-being of married working women. Kottesswari and Tameem (2014) in their study on 100 working women in various BPOs in Chennai city using the method of chi-square and found that job stress is affecting their performance. Owing to job stress they are not able to concentrate on their work properly and experience stress in the workplace irrespective of the area. Both the employer and the employee are following some stress coping strategies to overcome the stress. Dua and Sangwan (2017) conducted a study on stress among school teachers of Haryana and revealed that they were more vulnerable to stress factors behind including poor working conditions, scarcity of resources, heavy workloads, having less time for personal care, sleep and lack of family support. The researchers also found that stress management mechanisms like relaxation, entertainment, delegation, sleep, and exercise were taken by the respondents. Some of these problems are related to the job aspect, and some are related to her struggle in an attempt to achieve reconciliation between her responsibilities at home and work, while others are related to the customs and traditions imposed on women in society. Studies have differed in their findings regarding the effects of work on a woman's duties and her family life.

### **Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the level of stress among working women.
2. To find out the influence of socio-economic variables women on stress.

### **Methodology**

This study was conducted among working women in purposively selected Hisar district of Haryana state due to the easy accessibility of data collection. From each area (rural and urban), 200 working women were taken randomly. Hence, a total of 400 working women from four Schools, two Collages, Anganwadi, a Public Health Center, and a Hospital Constituted the sample. The perceived stress scale (PSS) developed by Cohen *et al.* (1983) was used as psychological tool for measuring the perception of stress and data were collected by personal interview method. Frequency, percentage and Z tests were computed to draw the meaningful inferences.

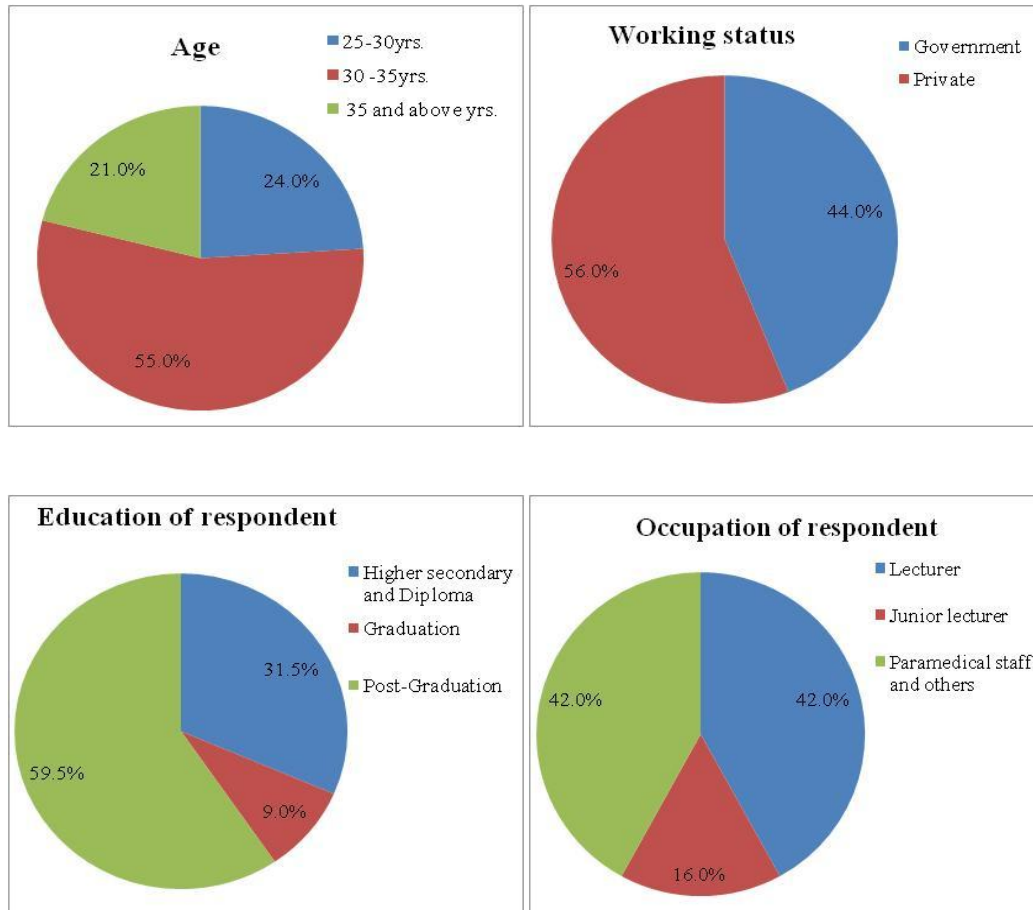
## Results and discussion

Table 1 personal and socio- economic profile of the respondent has been clearly explained and revealed that near about the equal number of working women were in urban 59.0 percent and rural 51.0 percent areas where 55.0 percent of working women were in the age range of 30 -35 years followed by 24.0 percent in 25-30 years and 21.0 percent of above 35years of working women. With regard to working status of working women, more than fifty percent 58.5 percent of working women were doing private job in urban areas similarly 53.5 percent in rural were having job in private sectors. Rest of the respondents were engaged in government job in both locations. Figures pertaining to education of respondents revealed that majority 62.5 percent of them were educated up to post graduation level where as 33.0 percent women higher secondary and diploma and only 4.5 percent were graduate in urban areas. But in rural areas distribution of working women with regards to education was observed as 56.5 percent up to post-graduation level and 30.0 percent of respondent were higher secondary and diploma and rest of them 13.5 percent were having education up to graduation level. As per the educational status of spouse was concerned, 47.0 percent respondents' spouse were up to post graduate and 41.7 percent of respondents was graduate and rest of them were higher secondary and diploma in both of the locations. Data regarding respondent's occupational profile indicated that 42.0 percent of respondents were having position as lecturer and other paramedical staff whereas only 16.0 percent were junior lecturer. In urban areas, 58.5 percent respondents were lecturer occupation followed by other paramedical staff and others 37.0 percent and junior lecturer 4.5percent. In rural area, nearly equal percentage of respondent was engaged in lecturer and junior lecturer 25.5 percent and 27.5 percent respectively. Data regarding the occupational pattern of respondents spouse revealed that 42.2 percent were in service, 37.2 percent were involved in farming, 18.2 percent was working as caste occupation and 2.2 percent were working as daily paid labourers.

**Table1: Personal Profile of the Respondents**

Sr. No.	Variables	Rural n=200	Urban n=200	Total n=400
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age</b>			
	25-30yrs.	51(25.5)	45(22.5)	96(24.0)
	30 -35yrs.	102(51.0)	118(59.0)	220(55.0)
	35 and above yrs.	47(23.5)	37(18.5)	84(21.0)
<b>2.</b>	<b>Working status</b>			
	Government	93(46.5)	83(41.5)	176(44.0)
	Private	107(53.5)	117(58.5)	224(56.0)
<b>3.</b>	<b>Education of respondent</b>			
	Higher secondary and Diploma	60(30.0)	66(33.0)	126(31.5)
	Graduation	27(13.5)	9 (4.5)	36(9.0)
	Post-Graduation	113 (56.5)	125(62.5)	238(59.5)
<b>4.</b>	<b>Occupation of respondent</b>			
	Lecturer	51(25.5)	117(58.5)	168(42.0)
	Junior lecturer	55(27.5)	9(4.5)	64(16.0)
	Paramedical staff and others	94(47.5)	74(37.0)	168(42.0)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage



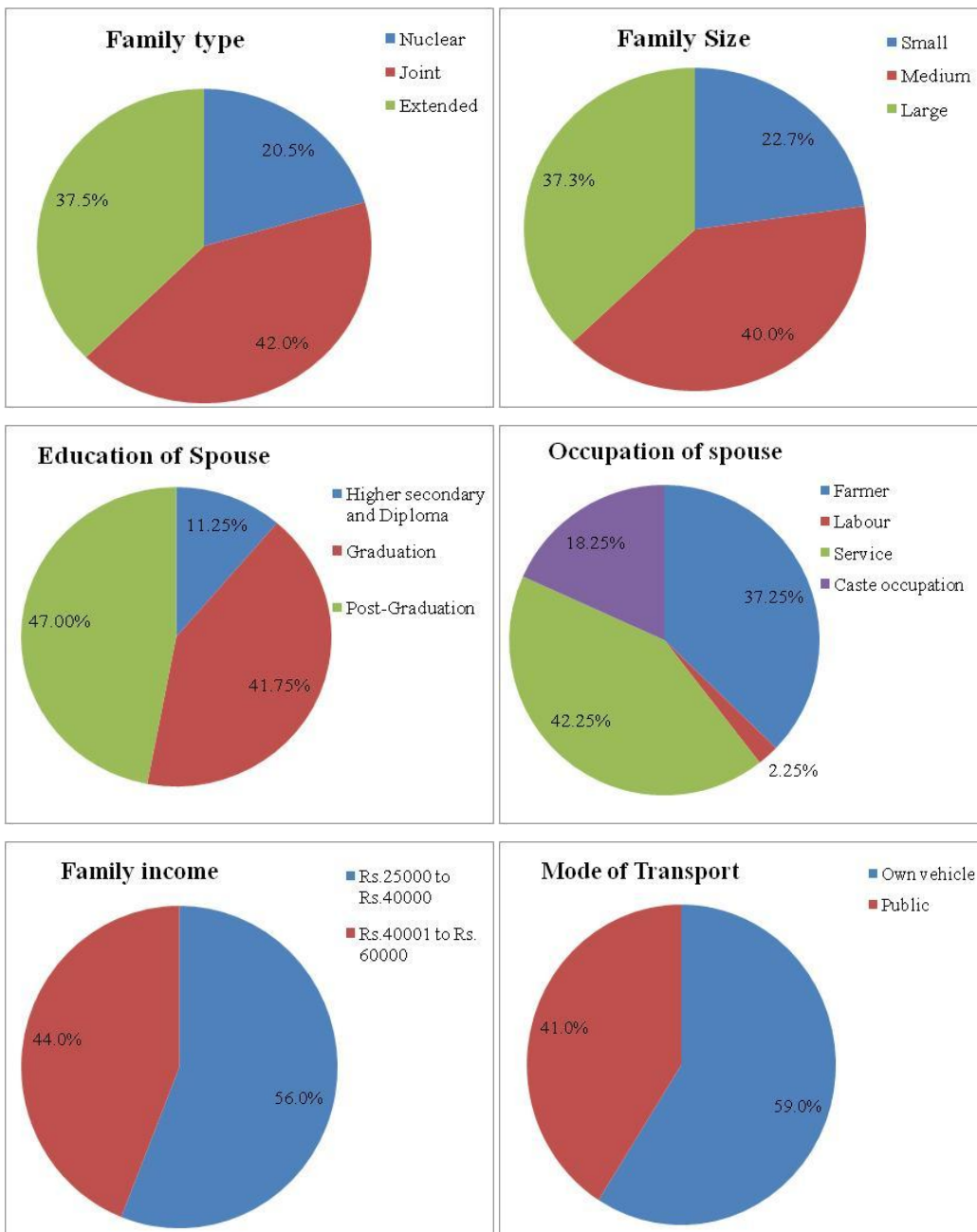
**Fig. 1: Personal profile of rural and urban working women**

**Table2: Socio -economic profile of rural and urban working women**

Sr. No.	Variables	Rural n=200	Urban n=200	Total n=400
<b>1.</b>	<b>Family type</b>			
	Nuclear	37(18.5)	45(22.5)	82(20.5)
	Joint	87(43.5)	81(40.5)	168(42.0)
	Extended	76(38.0)	74(37.0)	150(37.5)
<b>2.</b>	<b>Family Size</b>			
	Small	46(23.0)	45(22.5)	91(22.7)
	Medium	79(39.5)	81(40.5)	160(40.0)
	Large	75(37.5)	74(37.0)	149(37.3)
<b>3.</b>	<b>Education of Spouse</b>			
	Higher secondary and Diploma	20(10.0)	25(12.5)	45(11.3)
	Graduation	84(42.0)	83(41.5)	167(41.7)
	Post-Graduation	96(48.0)	92(46.0)	188(47.0)
<b>4.</b>	<b>Occupation of spouse</b>			
	Farmer	75(37.5)	74(37.0)	149(37.3)
	Labour	9(4.5)	-	9 (2.2)
	Service	88(44.0)	81(40.5)	169 (42.3)
	Caste occupation	28(14.0)	45(22.5)	73 (18.2)
<b>5.</b>	<b>Family income</b>			

	Low	107(53.5)	117(58.5)	224(56.0)
	High	93(46.5)	83(41.5)	176(44.0)
<b>6.</b>	<b>Mode of Transport</b>			
	Own vehicle	117(58.5)	119(59.5)	236(59.0)
	Public	83(41.5)	81(40.5)	164(41.0)

As per the family type is concerned with regard to urban and rural area, out of total sample 42.0 percent working women were belonged to joint family followed by approx. 37.0 percent of extended family and 20.0 percent were from nuclear family. In urban and rural area majority of working women 40.5 percent and 43.5 percent belonged to joint family followed by 37.0 percent and 38.0 percent of extended family and 22.5 percent and 18.5 percent of nuclear family.



Examining the total sample for family size unfold that the trend of medium sized family was prevalent as majority of the working women belonged to medium sized while only 22.5 percent accounted for small sized families and 23.0 percent in urban and rural area respectively. As per the educational status of spouse was concerned, 47.0 percent respondents' spouse were up to post graduate and 41.7 percent of respondents was graduate and rest of them were higher secondary and diploma in both of the locations. Data regarding the occupational pattern of respondents spouse revealed that 42.2 percent were in service, 37.2 percent were involved in farming, 18.2 percent was working as caste occupation and 2.2 percent were working as daily paid labourers.

Perusal of results further showed that the urban respondents 58.5 percent were from families with low family income followed by 41.5 percent with high family income. Where as in rural area 53.5 percent with low family income followed by 46.5 percent with high family income. Figures pertaining to mode of transport divulged that in urban area, 59.5 percent of respondents used own vehicle and 40.5 percent of respondents used public vehicle. In rural area 58.5 percent respondents used own vehicle as mode of transport followed by public vehicle of 41.5 percent.

### **Distribution of working women as per the level of stress**

Working women were assessed and were distributed on different level of perceived stress i.e. low, medium, and high categories. Results show that out of total sample 46.7 percent respondents were in low level of perceived stress category followed by 38.5 percent in high level and rest 14.7 percent were having medium level of perceived stress. Further, results show that in urban areas 93.5 percent working women have low level of perceived stress followed by 6.5 percent of medium level and nil percent of high level of perceived stress. In rural area majority of working women have high level of perceived stress that is 77.0 percent followed by medium and low level 23.0, 0 percent.

**Table 3: Distribution of working women as per the level of stress.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Rural n=200</b>	<b>Urban n=200</b>	<b>Total n=400</b>
<b>Perceived stress</b>			
Low	-	187(93.5)	187(46.7)
Medium	46(23.0)	13(6.5)	59(14.8)
High	154(77.0)	-	154(38.5)

### **Perceived stress across personal and socio economic variable:**

Means scores comparison of perceived stress of working women across personal and socio economic variable were analyzed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test in table 4.

Age of respondent was found to make significant impact on perceived stress in low ( $F=9.70$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) and medium level ( $F=4.08$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Mean Scores comparison of various groups highlighted that respondents of above 35 years age were having more perceived stress ( $M=40.34$ ) as compared to 25-30 years ( $M=11.76$ ). When age increased perceived stress also increases. Family Type did not lead

to significant differences in Mean scores of respondents for perceived stress in low, medium and high level of respondents as the differences were statistically non-significant. But Mean scores showed that extended family lead to more stress as compare to nuclear family.

Further results explained that family size created significant differences in the high level of perceived stress among working women ( $F=2.59, P<0.05$ ). respondents living in large sized families reported increases stress level ( $M=38.69$ ). Results concerning to comparison of perceived stress across personal and socio economic variables have been discussed in table 4. ‘Z’ test was used to study the differences in perceived stress across working status. It is predicted that working status made statistically significant differences in medium level ( $Z=2.26, P<0.05$ ) of perceived stress. Education of respondent predicted that statistically significant differences were seen as per medium and high level of stress ( $F= 3.12$  and  $3.05$  respectively,  $P<0.05$ ), whereas, low level of perceived stress were non-significant. When means of perceived stress across education of respondent were examined it was found that graduate reported more stress ( $M=54.35$ ) against their counterparts. Continuing with the table, the results related to comparison of stress across education of spouse, non – significant differences were observed. Moving towards the data on perceived stress across occupation of respondent s, significant differences were reflected in low level of stress ( $F=2.59, P<0.05$ ). Means scores comparisons established that paramedical staff and others ( $M=53.77$ ) felt more perceived stress than lecturer ( $M=41.19$ ). Comparison of respondent perceived stress across occupation of spouse revealed non-significant differences in perceived stress. Trend of mean scores showed that caste occupation ( $M=54.33$ ) had comparatively more stress against their counterparts.

Income was found to be significant factor in making differences in stress of medium and high level of working women ( $F= 2.15$  and  $3.97$  respectively,  $P<0.05$ ). Mean scores examination depicted that respondents belonging to low income families were more stress ( $M=16.38$ ) as compared to respondents belonging to high income families ( $M=11.50$ ) and differences within group were significant. Respondents used public vehicle found to be more stress ( $M=13.54$ ) as compared to respondents used own vehicle ( $M=11.25$ ).

**Table 4: Stress across personal and socio economic variable**

Sr. No.	Perceived stress	Personal and socio-economic variables			
1.		<b>Age</b>			
		<b>25- 30years</b>	<b>30- 35years</b>	<b>Above35years</b>	<b>F-value</b>
	<b>Low</b>	25.93 <sup>b</sup> ±1.87	25.33 <sup>b</sup> ±2.87	23.53 <sup>a</sup> ±1.37	9.70*
	<b>Medium</b>	11.76 <sup>b</sup> ±3.07	21.34 <sup>b</sup> ±2.21	40.34 <sup>a</sup> ±3.31	4.08*
	<b>High</b>	20.3 <sup>b</sup> ±1.07	24.24 <sup>b</sup> ±2.34	12.09 ±1.14	1.73
2.		<b>Family type</b>			
		<b>Nuclear</b>	<b>Joint</b>	<b>Extended</b>	<b>F-value</b>
	<b>Low</b>	20.01 <sup>b</sup> ±2.04	17.52 <sup>b</sup> ±2.34	30.60 <sup>b</sup> ±2.23	1.33
	<b>Medium</b>	28.91 <sup>b</sup> ±2.84	18.30 <sup>b</sup> ±2.59	18.43 <sup>b</sup> ±2.72	1.91

	<b>High</b>	19.63 <sup>b</sup> ±1.96	14.39 <sup>b</sup> ±2.36	34.02 <sup>b</sup> ±2.52	1.36	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Family size</b>					
		<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>F-value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	34.21 <sup>a</sup> ±14.04	27.22 <sup>b</sup> ±12.04	27.60 <sup>b</sup> ±12.23	0.59	
	<b>Medium</b>	30.71 <sup>a</sup> ±12.24	38.30 <sup>a</sup> ±13.29	38.43 <sup>a</sup> ±12.12	0.53	
	<b>High</b>	28.51 <sup>b</sup> ±13.65	33.69 <sup>a</sup> ±13.66	38.69 <sup>a</sup> ±13.21	2.97*	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Working status</b>					
		<b>Govt</b>		<b>Private</b>	<b>Z -value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	23.41±13.29		28.70±11.08	0.26	
	<b>Medium</b>	33.98±13.53		36.41±12.82	2.26*	
	<b>High</b>	28.18±13.67		31.62±12.88	1.67	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Education of respondent</b>					
		<b>Higher secondary and Diploma</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Post graduate</b>	<b>F-value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	40.06±14.32	43.77±15.67	40.80±15.02	1.18	
	<b>Medium</b>	44.05±10.78	54.35±20.43	42.01±15.31	3.12*	
	<b>High</b>	39.88±14.62	49.08±18.92	42.75±15.22	3.05*	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Education of spouse</b>					
		<b>Higher secondary and Diploma</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Post Graduate</b>	<b>F -value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	40.11±12.65	40.50±15.37	45.51±15.34	1.63	
	<b>Medium</b>	49.84±18.78	53.06±19.31	50.54±19.97	0.90	
	<b>High</b>	58.92±18.98	66.78±18.52	48.02±17.94	0.68	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Occupation of respondent</b>					
		<b>Lecturer</b>	<b>Junior lecturer</b>	<b>Paramedical staff and others</b>	<b>F-value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	41.19 <sup>b</sup> ±14.53	43.87 <sup>a</sup> ±17.67	48.68 <sup>a</sup> ±14.09	2.87*	
	<b>Medium</b>	52.67 <sup>a</sup> ±19.58	48.40 <sup>a</sup> ±20.29	53.77 <sup>a</sup> ±18.82	1.04	
	<b>High</b>	46.93 <sup>a</sup> ±18.12	46.13 <sup>a</sup> ±19.02	51.22 <sup>a</sup> ±16.91	1.98	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Occupation of spouse</b>					
		<b>Farmer</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Caste occupation</b>	<b>F -value</b>
	<b>Low</b>	41.57 <sup>a</sup> ±15.44	40.06 <sup>a</sup> ±15.20	42.47 <sup>a</sup> ±16.04	45.63 <sup>a</sup> ±15.04	1.16
	<b>Medium</b>	51.17 <sup>a</sup> ±20.63	51.20 <sup>a</sup> ±20.24	50.98 <sup>a</sup> ±18.91	54.30 <sup>a</sup> ±19.28	0.29
	<b>High</b>	46.37 <sup>a</sup> ±13.65	45.63 <sup>a</sup> ±13.65	46.72 <sup>a</sup> ±18.02	49.96 <sup>a</sup> ±17.24	0.42
<b>9.</b>	<b>Family income</b>					
		<b>Low</b>		<b>High</b>	<b>Z-value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	9.50±3.91		9.68±5.77	0.57	
	<b>Medium</b>	13.06±4.31		13.54±4.54	2.15*	
	<b>High</b>	16.38±8.04		11.50±4.38	3.97*	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Mode of transport</b>					
		<b>Own vehicle</b>		<b>Public vehicle</b>	<b>Z-value</b>	
	<b>Low</b>	9.35±3.91		9.68±3.80	0.68	
	<b>Medium</b>	11.25±4.61		13.54±4.21	0.36	
	<b>High</b>	10.30±4.53		11.50±4.15	0.69	

**Conclusion:** It is concluded that majority (55%) of working women were from the age range of 30 - 35 years age group, having joint family (42%) and doing private job (56%). In case of perceived stress near half (46.7%) of the working women perceived low level of stress. Age of respondent was found to make significant impact on stress. Mean scores comparison of various age groups highlighted that



elder women were having more stress as compared to women at young age that indicated that as age increased stress also increased. Working women in extended family were having more stress as compare to their counterparts from nuclear family. Results explained that family size created significant differences in the high level of stress among working women living in large sized families reported increases stress level. Education of respondent predicted that statistically significant differences were seen as per medium and high level of stress. Stress with regard to education of respondent were examined and found that graduate respondents had more stress as compared to their post graduate counterparts. Income was found to be positively correlated with differences in stress level from medium and high level of among working women in rural and urban locations.

### References

1. Ansuman, P. Adithya, P. P. and Madhulita, P. (2014). Mental health status among married working women residing in Bhubaneswar city. A psychological survey, *Bio Medical Research. International journal of psychology*, **4**(3): 73-75.
2. Balaji, R. (2014). Work Life Balance of Women Employees. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, **3**(10): 2319- 8753.
3. Blanco, G. and Feldman, L. (2000). Home-making responsibilities and health of working women. *Salud Publica Mex, May-June*. **42**:217-25.
4. Cohen, S., Kamarck, T and Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, **24**(4): 385-396.
5. Dua, K. and Sangwan, V. (2017). Study on stress among female of high school teachers of Haryana. *International journal of Indian psychology*, **4**(2): 2349-3429.
6. Kotteeswari, M., and Tameem, S. S. (2014). "Job stress and its impact on performance employees working in BPOs: A Study". *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management*, **5**(2):19-27.
7. Sharma, B. and Nair, M. (2015). A Qualitative Study on Causes and Effects of Stress among Working Women in Management Colleges in Jaipur. *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, **4**( 6): 152-157.
8. Walker, J. (2005) Stress and depression (online) (cited 2014 Jan). Retrieved: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/research/working-women-stress-and-depression/>