

Effect of Relaxation Techniques on Management of Stress among Housewives

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to assess the Effectiveness of Relaxation Techniques among Housewives. Based on the purposive sampling technique 30 housewives were selected from Agartala town. A proper rapport was established with the housewives and socio-demographic profile was noted. Kindler Stress Assessment Inventory was presented to the housewives. Then the steps of Relaxation techniques were administered to the housewives and they were instructed to practice daily for 4 weeks. After the completion of 4 weeks, the Somatic symptoms, Psychological symptoms and Stress resilience were again assessed with the help of Kindler Stress Assessment Inventory. Results indicated that there is reduction in the level of stress among the housewives after applying Relaxation techniques.

Keywords: Stress; Relaxation; Housewives.

Various definitions have been offered for the concept of stress. Stress is defined as “the nonspecific result of any demand upon the body, be the effect mental or somatic”. Several studies, in various fields and in clinical setting, have shown deleterious effects of stress on healthy people and on various groups of population including house wives. “A housewife is a woman whose main occupation is running or managing her family, home, caring for and educating her children, cooking and storing food, buying goods, the family needs in day-to-day life, cleaning and maintaining the home, making clothes for the family, and who is generally not employed outside the home”.

Stress, for many years, has been recognized as a source of physical and mental health impairment among housewives. There are evidences in the literature that stress may reduce the effectiveness of human immune system and increase the risk of infections and diseases among housewives. Housewives, especially those with young children at home, are significantly more anxious and stressed because of various psychological and social factor than their counterparts.

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Psychological well-being of house wives is often enhanced by the most stressful experiences of circumstances concerning their family roles.

Relaxation technique is an effective way among housewives which can help them to manage their level of stress in a variety of situation. Relaxation is not just about peace of mind or enjoying a hobby. Relaxation is a process that decreases the effects of stress on mind and body. Relaxation techniques can help to cope with everyday stress. It is also effective in reducing various stresses related health problems. Several studies have assessed the effects of relaxation on stress in patients and housewives. Lyne et al. mentioned progressive muscle relaxation as an effective technique in reducing cancer distress. Ghafari et al. indicated progressive muscle relaxation as an essential tool in reducing stress. Conversely, studies of Edelman et al., Gaston-Johansson et al., and Bordeleau et al. considered relaxation as an effective method in reducing pain and distress among housewives. Likewise, Sloman and Molassiotis et al. reported relaxation to be effective in anxiety and stress reduction among housewives at different situation.

Relaxation techniques are often employed as one of the element of a wider stress management program among housewives that can decrease muscle tension, lower the blood pressure and slow heart and breathe rates with other health benefits. The present study aims to determine the effectiveness of relaxation training programme as any method, process, procedure, or activity that will help a housewife to relax, to attain a state of increased calmness. This will reduce the incidence of stress among housewives in order to maintain a healthy life style.

METHODS

Objectives of the Study:

- Determine the socio-economic profile of the housewives.
- To assess the level of stress among the housewives in selected areas.
- To assess the level of stress after administering the relaxation techniques (Benson's Relaxation Response, Breathing Rate Reduction Technique, OMKAR Meditation).
- To find out the difference between the level of stress among housewives after administering the relaxation techniques.
- To manage the level of stress among housewives

Hypotheses:

- After administering relaxation techniques the somatic symptoms of stress among housewives will be decreased.
- After administering relaxation techniques the psychological symptoms of stress among housewives will be decreased.
- After administering relaxation techniques the stress resilience among housewives will be increased.

Operational Definitions:-

- **EFFECTIVENESS:** Effectiveness means the relaxation techniques how well these are useful to reduce the level of stress among housewives.

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- **RELAXATION TECHNIQUE:** Relaxation techniques are a great way to help with stress management. Relaxation isn't just about peace of mind or enjoying a hobby. Relaxation is a process that decreases the effects of stress on our mind and body. Relaxation techniques can help us to cope with everyday stress and stress related to various health problems, such as cancer and pain.
- **STRESS:** If any internal or external conditions will affect the balance or equilibrium of a woman it results in inability to cope with the demands of her day to day life.
- **HOUSEWIVES:** A women who manages a household works while her husband earns the family income.

Assumptions:

- The housewives are not aware about their stress level.
- The housewives have inadequate knowledge regarding the relaxation techniques.
- The housewives may not follow the relaxation technique in their day to day life.
- Initiating them to follow the relaxation techniques will help housewives to relieve from stress.

Method Of Data Collection:

Research Design:

One group pre-test and post-test Design is used to assess the level of stress among housewives.

O1 X O2

Here, O1= Pre intervention assessment, X= Treatment (Relaxation techniques), O2= Post intervention assessment.

Research Variables:

- Demographic Variables: Age, qualification, economic status, area of living, type of family, number of children.
- Study Variables:
 - a) **Independent Variables:**
 - Knowledge of Benson Relaxation Response in reducing stress.
 - Knowledge of Breathing Rate Reduction Technique in reducing stress.
 - Knowledge of OMKAR Meditation in reducing stress.
 - b) **Dependent Variables: Level of stress among housewives.**
- Sample: The study was carried out among 30 housewives, who were selected purposively and they were matched in terms of age & education. Most of them belonged to middle socio-economic status and having children. All the housewives belong from urban background.

Criteria for sample selection:

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

1. The housewives who can read and write the Bengali or English.
2. The housewives who are present at the time of data collection.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

1. The study excludes the housewives who are not co-operate
2. The housewives who are physically and mentally ill.

Sampling Technique: Purposive Sampling

Tools for Data Collection:

Kindler's Stress Assessment Inventory developed by Kindler was used to assess the level of stress of the study subject. It is a 4 point rating scale. This inventory was divided into three sub types – somatic symptoms, psychological symptoms & stress resilience. In total there are 50 items in the inventory. In the present inventory high score in somatic & psychological symptoms indicate high level of stress; and high score in resilience indicate high stress coping skill.

Intervention Used:

BENSON'S RELAXATION RESPONSE (BRR):

The term, 'Relaxation Response' was coined by Dr. Herbert Benson, professor, author, cardiologist, and founder of Harvard's Mind/Body Medical Institute. The response is defined as your personal ability to encourage your body to release chemicals and brain signals that make your muscles and organs slow down and increase blood flow to the brain. In his book *The Relaxation Response*, Dr. Benson describes the scientific benefits of relaxation, explaining that regular practice of the Relaxation Response can be an effective treatment for a wide range of stress-related disorders.

Steps involved in Benson's Relaxation Response:

- Sit comfortably.
- Keep the left hand palms straight facing up resting over Thais & the right hand palm straight facing up resting over Thais
- Keep head, neck, & spine erect, straight & relaxed.
- For the first 2 minutes observed what thoughts are passing through mind, do not get disturbed by the flow of thought and ignore the external noises.
- Then think of the name of the favourite God, mentally relaxed manner for 16 minutes.
- Think the name of God when breathe out and keep calm while breathing in.
- Finally remain silent for 2 minutes and open the eyes.

BREATHING RATE REDUCTION TECHNIQUE (BRRT):

Breathing is an automatic function of the body that is controlled by the respiratory centre of the brain. When we feel stressed, our breathing rate and pattern changes as part of the 'fight-or-flight response'. The primary role of breathing is to absorb oxygen and to expel carbon dioxide through the movement of the lungs. When a person is under stress, their breathing pattern changes. Typically, an anxious person takes small, shallow breaths, using their shoulders rather than their diaphragm to move air in and out of their lungs. This style of breathing disrupts the balance of gases in the body.

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Steps involved in Breathing Rate Technique:

- At first the subject has to mentally count 1 while exhaling & count 2 while inhaling. This is to be continued for a period of 1 minute, ultimately the total no. is to be recorded.
- After each trial a gap of 1 minute rest is required.
- Continue the same procedure with a slight difference of trying to gradually prolong the duration of exhalation & inhalation within the comfort level.
- Like this 20 trials have to be done per day.

OMKAR MEDITATION:

This technique has been described by Acharya Rajneesh (Osho, 1992). Om meditation is another name for mantra or transcendental meditation. Om is a word known as a mantra and a mantra is what we quietly focus on during Om meditation. Om (pronounced AUM) is one of many mantras which we can use. A mantra is a syllable or set of syllables (sound vibrations) which help clear the mind.

Steps involved in OMKAR Meditation:

- The client was asked to sit on a stool in an upright position or sit in Ardha Padmasana, half-lotus position, on the floor (over a mat or a bed sheet).
- Then the sound “OM” was repeated aloud, extending “O” for half of the time and “M” for the later half.
- After completion of “OM” sound the client inhaled the air through the nostrils. And this cycle of chanting “OM” & inhaling the air, it was practiced for half an hour.
- This session was followed by fifteen minutes rest.

Procedure:

At first the socio-demographic perform and stress questionnaire were arranged. 30 housewives were selected for data collection. A proper rapport was established with the housewives. After that socio-demographic perform and kindler stress assessment inventory were presented to the subject. In case of kindler stress assessment inventory the subject was instructed to select 1 out of 4 options according to her feelings. For data collection self administered method was used. Then the steps of intervention techniques were administered to the housewives and they were instructed to practice daily for 4 weeks. After the completion of 4 weeks of intervention, the Somatic symptoms, psychological symptoms and stress resilience are again assessed with the help of Kindler Stress Assessment Inventory. The obtained scores were analyse with the help of appropriate scoring key and necessary calculations were done to compute the before and after intervention stress level.

DURATION: 4-6 weeks

Data Analysis:

After collecting the response from the housewives, at first all data sheets were checked thoroughly to find out any gaps or discrepancies in the response sheets. For data analysis,

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descriptive statistics i.e., mean, S.D was used and for the Hypothesis inferential statistics i.e. *t* test was employed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

TABLE-1, Showing the percentage of socio-economic profile of housewives

Parameters	Characteristics	Mode Of Response	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	*30-35	5	16.67%
	*36-40	12	40%
	*41-45	9	30%
	*46-50	4	13.33%
Education	* Below Graduate	19	63.33%
	* Graduate	11	36.67%
Family Environment	* Peaceful	21	70%
	* Not so Peaceful	9	30%
No. of Children	*No Children	1	3.33%
	* 1-2	27	90%
	* 3-5	2	6.67%
Type of family	* Nuclear	9	30%
	* Joint	21	70%
Monthly Income	*Below 20000	4	13.33%
	* 20001-25000	19	63.33%
	* 25001-30000	3	10%
	* 30001-35000	3	10%
	* 35001-40000	1	3.33%
Area of living	*Urban	30	100%
	*Rural	0	0%

TABLE-2, Showing the mean, S.D, and *t* value of before & after somatic symptoms of stress among housewives

INTERVENTION	NUMBER	MEAN	S.D	t-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Before intervention	30	42.03	3.47	16.39	Significant
After intervention	30	30.06	2.03		

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TABLE-3, Graphical Representation of data showing the difference between Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Somatic symptoms of Stress

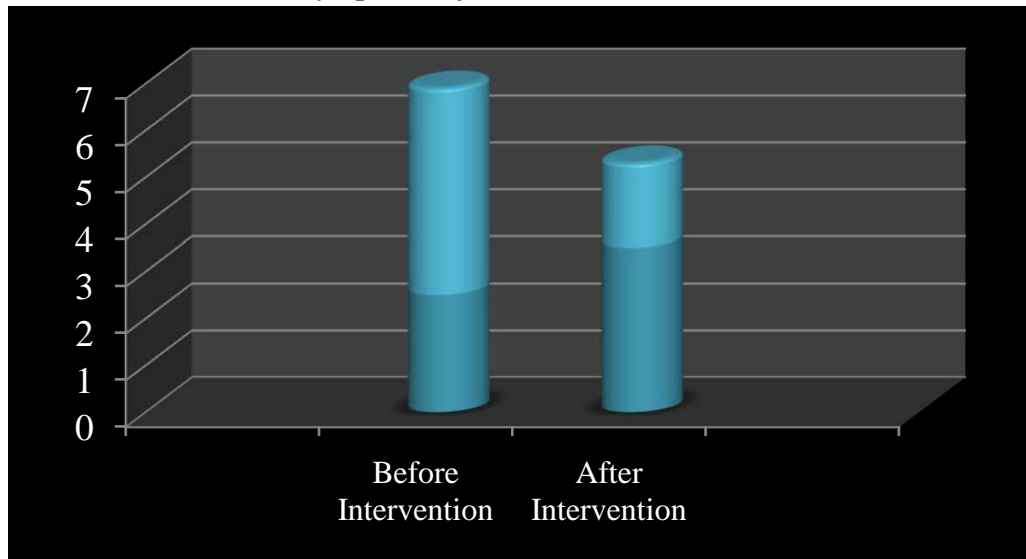
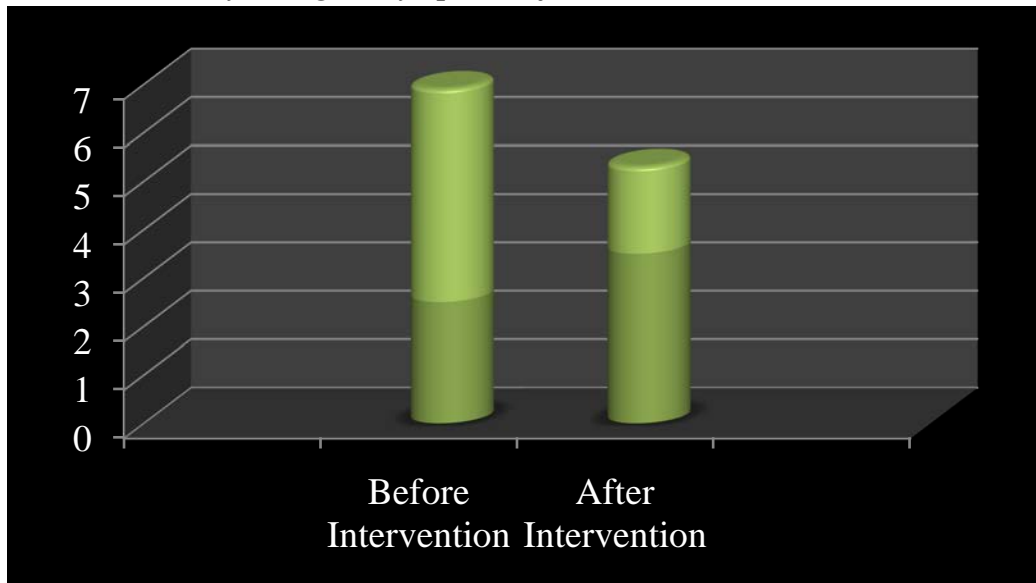


TABLE-4, Showing the mean, S.D and t value of before and after psychological symptoms of stress among housewives

INTERVENTION	NUMBER	MEAN	S.D	t-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Before intervention	30	41.3	3.18	15.57	Significant
After intervention	30	30.04	2.17		

TABLE-5, Graphical Representation of data showing the difference between Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention Psychological symptoms of Stress

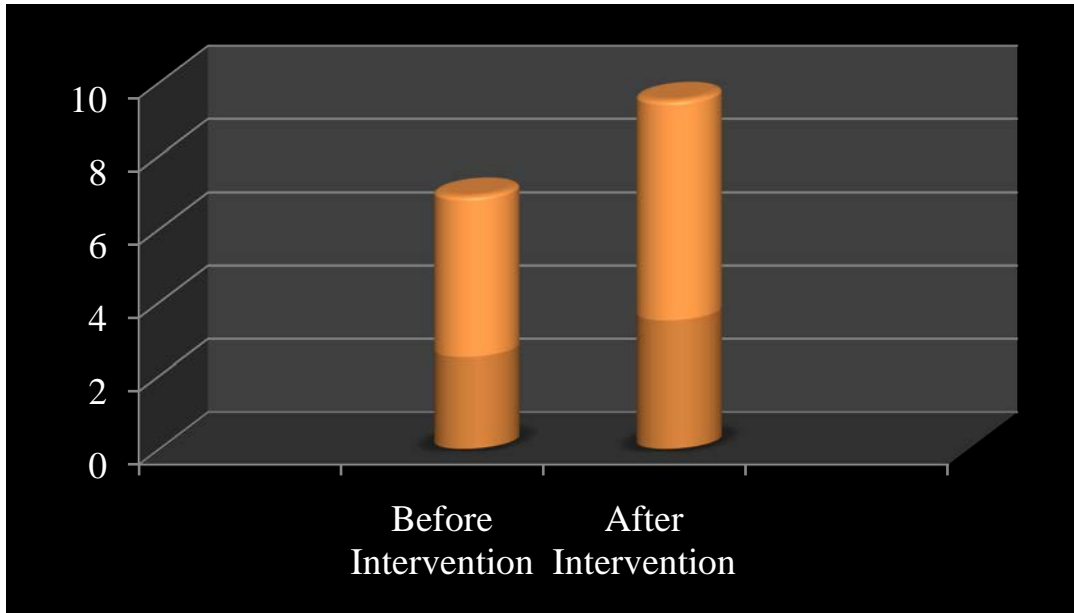


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TABLE-6, Showing the mean, S.D, and t value of before & after Resilience of stress among housewives

INTERVENTION	NUMBER	MEAN	S.D	t-VALUE	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
Before intervention	30	22.13	1.72	19.20	Significant
After intervention	30	34.8	3.22		

TABLE-7, Graphical Representation of data showing the difference between Pre-Intervention & Post-Intervention Resilience of Stress



FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- From the socio-economic profile of the housewives, it was found that the housewives belonged from the age group of 30-50. Among 30 housewives 63.33% were below graduate and 36.67% were graduate. All the housewives who were selected for the study belonged from urban area of Agartala.
- The socio-demographic profile also revealed that among 30 housewives, 70% lived in nuclear family and 30% lived in joint families. Among 30 housewives 70% reported that their family environment was peaceful and 30% reported that their family environment was not so peaceful. Most of the housewives were having children.
- It was found that most of the subjects belonged from middle socio- economic status. The monthly income of their family ranges from 15000-40000. This indicates that the housewives maintained a middle class lifestyle.
- The before intervention total score of somatic, psychological and resilience of stress for 30 Housewives are 1261, 1239 and 664. And after intervention the total score of somatic,

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psychological and resilience of stress for 30 Housewives are 902,912 and 1044 respectively.

- The before and after intervention mean score of somatic symptoms were 42.03 and 30.06 and S.D of before and after intervention somatic symptoms were 3.47 and 2.03. The t-value of before & after intervention Somatic symptom was 16.39.
- The mean score of before and after intervention psychological symptoms were 41.3 and 30.03 and the S.D of before and after intervention psychological symptoms were 3.18 and 2.17 respectively. The t-value of before and after intervention psychological symptom was 15.57.
- The mean score of before and after intervention stress resilience were 22.13 and 34.8. The S.D of before and after intervention stress resilience were 1.72 and 3.22 respectively. And the t-value of before & after intervention stress resilience was 19.20.
- The t-value of before & after intervention somatic, psychological and resilience were significant which indicates that there is a significant difference found between before and after intervention somatic, psychological and resilience of stress.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the present study was to manage the level of stress among housewives by applying appropriate suitable intervention techniques. Stress may be defined as the sum of physical and mental responses to an unacceptable disparity between real or imagined personal experience and personal expectations.

Stress problems are very common. The American psychological Association's (2007) stress in America's poll found that 1/3 of people in the United States report experiencing extreme levels of negative stress. In addition nearly 1 out of 5 people reported that they are experiencing high levels of negative stress, 15 or more days per month. Housewife is the most neglected occupation. Stress is a part of every body's life both in men and women. Though it is considered that women is the most common victims to stress. There are certain specific conditions that might lead to some special kind of stress in women, these conditions include pregnancy, menopause and familial strife. In modern day women are expected to juggle their tasks as a result of escalating expectations placed on their weak shoulders. They mould themselves to fit into various social customs like wives, mothers, sisters and daughters-in-law etc. Pearlin and Lieberman (1997) found that when stressful life events were relatively infrequent or minor, married and unmarried women had similar level of depression. Studies have been also conducted in Rajasthan, on Indian women regarding the marital adjustment and subjective well-being. In India educated housewives and working women revealed that marital adjustment and subjective well-being of the employed women were better than those of housewives. Women working outside their homes reported good general health, life satisfaction and self-esteem and lower scores on insecurity and anxiety. The demographic characteristic was age, education, area of living, monthly income, family type, number of children and family environment which influenced the various sources of stressors. The present study shows that most of the housewives

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belong from middle socio-economic status, they lived in urban areas, 70% belongs from nuclear family and 30% belongs to joint family and most of them are having children. They are stressed because they have to manage their urban lifestyle, the education of their children and other accessories within their monthly budget.

In the present study, intervention module is applied to manage the level of stress among housewives. Stress is linked to physical and mental health, as well as decreased willingness to take on new and creative endeavors. The practice of appropriate relaxation technique gives the tool and techniques, which helps to expand conscious awareness into the unconscious parts of the mind in order to become aware of the patterns and habits which lead to stress. Breathing relaxation has effective results on stress management. Breathing exercise and meditation was found to be useful in controlling asthma and other breathing disorders, high blood pressure, heart trouble, backache, spondylitis, chronic cold and cough and many other ailments among the housewives. The practice also improved the mental outlook of the women and makes her more positive, cheerful, optimistic and confident. By following this practice housewives can accomplish her work more energetically and effectively.

CONCLUSIONS:

Today there are many housewives who are involved in numerous daily life activities such as manage household work, cooking, involving themselves in their children's education, social activities etc. Women alleviating stress by altering their lifestyle through building greater stress tolerance, changing their pace of life, controlling distressful thoughts, acquiring problem solving skills, and seeking social support. It can be said that, Relaxation techniques are very important therapy in coping with stress. By applying these techniques in everyday life, housewives can manage their stress. The relaxation technique produces effective results in dealing with stress. The housewives can protect themselves from different stress which is related to physical and psychological disturbances. Their stress resilience capacity will increased by practicing these techniques daily.

IMPLICATION OF THE PRESENT STUDY:

The findings of the study were important from the point of view of excellence of housewives and their effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with stress. Stress affects the efficiency of the individual. So it is necessary to provide proper environment and support to maintain individual stress. Therefore, there is the need for effective management of the stressors by making use of different management strategies by providing effective relaxation techniques. The study has revealed a remarkable difference between before and after intervention level of stress among housewives. Intervention techniques help them to develop stress resilience strategies. It can be said, that the potentiality of coping strategies will have positive reinforcing effect on stress, which is an effective measures to manage stressors in day-to-day and resolve the state of stress by making the housewives to face and resolve the state of stress by making use of the management strategies consciously at appropriate time. The present study is useful to guide

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housewives to manage their level of stress by creating awareness about the stressors and coping strategies for minimization of stress in their life as stress cannot be vanished from life.

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