**A Study of Stress among female street vendors of Patna**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:-** Over the past two decades, there has been an increasing belief that the experience of stress necessarily has undesirable consequences for health. It has become a common assumption that it is associated with the impairment of health. Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual’s adaptability or stimulates an individual’s body or mentality. Stress can be caused by environmental factors, psychological factors, biological factors, and social factors. It can be negative or positive to an individual, depending on the strength and persistence of the stress, the individual’s personality, cognitive appraisal of the stress, and social support. Young people become stressed for many reasons. The Minnesota study presented students with a list of 47 common life events and asked them to identify those they had experienced in the last six months that they considered to be bad.

Patna has emerged as a big town in last some years. There are so many colonies here with so much population. It has become a big market for small businessmen. Here, there are so many street vendors who are selling daily necessaries like vegetables, fruits, Eggs, Breads, clothing stuffs, Utensils etc. Females are also doing job of street vendors to upgrade the financial status of their families.

**Objectives of the Study:** The main objectives of the present research were as follows-

1. To explore the level of Stress among female street vendors.
2. To examine the role of family structure of female street vendors in determining the level of stress among them.
3. To suggest policy recommendations to the government and other stake-holders.

**Research Questions:** With the available literature and the objectives of the study in perspective, the following questions have been raised:

1. Are female street vendors facing stress?
2. What are the factors of stress among female street vendors in Bihar?
3. How their family and social lives could be improved?

**Method:-** The present study was planned to examine the level of stress among the female street vendors of Patna district with an intervening variable i.e. family structure. The subjects were 50 female volunteers residing in slum areas of Patna district. Incidental cum Purposive sampling method will be applied for determining the sample.

Stress Scale developed by Vijaya Laxmi and Shruti Narain has been used in this study. It has 40 items, Each item has two alternatives- Yes and No. Scoring has been done with the help of scoring key. Positive items are scored as 1 and 0 while negative items are scored as 0 and 1. Variation of scores on this scale is from 0 to 40. Higher score indicates high level of stress.

The between group design has been used in the present study. Here, the family structure (Nuclear and Joint) of the female vendors has been studied as independent variable while stress has been considered as the dependent variable.

**Result:-** Results indicated that the female street vendors have been suffering from stress frequently. They are in surge of negative psychological state. This stress was more frequent in female vendors belonging to joint families than that of nuclear families.

**Conclusion:-** Conclusively, it can be stated that the female street vendors of Patna face stress in high frequency. Also, family structure is a prominent factor in determining the stress among them.