

Challenges Faced by Women Working in Night Shift

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Abstract

This study focuses on women from Tirupattur who travel outside their hometown for employment and are engaged in night shift work. This research examines the challenges faced by women working night shifts, focusing on physical health, psychological well-being, work-life balance, safety, organizational support, career growth, and economic necessity. The study aims to analyze the impact of night shifts on female employees and identify key factors affecting their overall well-being. A sample of 100 women employees was selected using a random lottery system to ensure unbiased representation. The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods, using a structured questionnaire for data collection. Statistical techniques such as reliability tests, Z-tests, and ANOVA were applied to assess how demographic factors like age, marital status, job role, and work experience influence the challenges faced by night shift workers. Findings reveal that irregular sleep patterns, workplace stress, lack of organizational support, and societal perceptions significantly affect women's experience in night shifts. Safety concerns and limited career advancement opportunities further exacerbate their struggles. The study emphasizes the need for flexible work schedules, wellness programs, enhanced security measures, and career development initiatives to create a more supportive work environment. The insights from this research will help organizations implement effective policies to improve the well-being and professional growth of women working in night shifts.

Keywords: Night shift challenges, women employees, work-life balance, psychological well-being, physical health, workplace safety, organizational support, career growth, economic necessity, employee well-being.

Introduction:

The increasing participation of women in night shift employment has created both opportunities and significant challenges. While industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, and transportation rely on night shift workers to maintain operations, women face unique difficulties

that impact their health, safety, work-life balance, and career growth. Disrupted sleep cycles, heightened security risks, and societal expectations make night shifts particularly demanding. Despite workplace policies aimed at supporting them, many women continue to experience physical and mental stress, job insecurity, and limited career advancement opportunities.

Night shift work often leads to irregular sleep patterns, fatigue, and long-term health concerns such as sleep disorders, headaches, and digestive issues. Additionally, women working night shifts struggle with balancing professional and family responsibilities, as caregiving roles and household duties traditionally fall on them. Safety concerns during late-night travel further increase their stress levels, affecting their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

This study explores the key challenges faced by women in night shifts, focusing on factors such as workplace security, organizational support, and social perceptions. By understanding these issues, the research aims to provide recommendations for improving policies, ensuring workplace safety, and fostering a more supportive environment for women engaged in night shift employment.

Methodology

Aim

The aim of this study is to explore and analyse the unique challenges faced by women night shift workers, particularly in relation to safety, financial stability, work-life balance, and health.

Research Objectives

- To identify the physical and psychological challenges faced by women working night shifts.
- To assess the availability and safety of public transportation.
- To examine the impact of night shift work on women's ability to balance work responsibilities with family and household duties.
- To explore the safety concerns, both at the workplace and during commuting.
- To explore how organizations address safety concerns for women.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift.

H1: There is a significant relationship between age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift.

Test Type: Correlation

Result: The correlation test was applied with variables and it was evident that there is no significant relationship between the age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted by the researcher.

Research Design

The researcher chose the descriptive research design as it provides a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by women working night shifts. This design helps in analyzing the existing workplace conditions, safety measures, health impacts, and work-life balance among women employees. The study aims to describe the real-life experiences and difficulties encountered by women working night shifts in these industries.

Universal and Sampling:

Women those who go out of Tirupattur for work was chosen by the researcher for the research study. A total of 100 women were selected for this study to ensure sufficient representation while maintaining manageability in terms of data collection and analysis. The researcher adopted the probability sampling using the simple random sampling technique to select 100 samples.

Tools for Data Collection

The researcher used the questionnaire model because the questionnaire model is one of the good methods in which the respondents would read and understand easily and effectively give their answer in an effective manner. These questions were framed based on the specific objectives of the research. The data was collected in two ways. The primary source of data collected from the 100 respondents from the industry using questionnaire model. The secondary source of data from the books, journals, and internet, which will add more information for the topic and become base for forming objectives of this study.

Result and Discussions

Table 1

Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha

Instrument	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Challenges faced by women working in night shift	7	0.762

From the presented table 1, it describes Cronbach's alpha is a valuable tool for assessing the internal consistency reliability of scales and questionnaires. It provides researchers with a quantitative measure of the extent to which items within a scale are measuring the same underlying construct, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of research findings. In this study Cronbach's Alpha as measure was used to assess the reliability of a set of attributes or test items. The general rule of thumb is that a Cronbach's alpha of **.60 and above is good, then .70 and above is better and .90 and above is best**. The above table infers that all items used in the study have an alpha value of above .60, inferring a good reliability of the questionnaire adopted for the study.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents based on overall Challenges Faced by Women Working in Night Shift

S. No.	Challenges Faced by Women Working in Night Shift	Low	High
1	Physical Challenges	62.0	38.0
2	Psychological Challenges	67.0	33.0
3	Work-Life Balance	64.0	36.0

4	Safety and Security During Night Shift	64.0	36.0
5	Organizational Support	56.0	44.0
6	Career Growth and Opportunities	71.0	29.0
7	Economic Necessity	59.0	41.0

The presented table 2 states that almost the majority (62%) of the respondents reported a low level of physical difficulties. However, less than two fifth (38%) of the respondents experience a high level of physical challenges.

The presented table 2 stats that a significant majority (67%) of the respondents reported a low level of psychological challenges, while one-third (33%) experience a high level of psychological strain.

The presented table states that nearly Majority (64%) of the respondents reported a low level of work-life balance. While, more than one third (36%) of the respondents demonstrated a high level of work-life balance.

The analysis shows that nearly Majority (64%) of the respondents reported a low level of safety and security during night shifts, while only more than one third (36%) of the respondents experienced a high sense of safety.

The analysis reveals that 56% of the respondents reported a low level of organizational support, while 44% experienced a high level of support from their organization.

The presented table states that Less than three fourth (71%) of the respondents reported a low level of career growth and opportunities. While more than one fourth (29%) of the respondent expressed a high level of career growth and opportunities.

The presented table states that a majority (59%) of the respondents reported a low level of economic necessity, while more than two fifth (41%) of the respondent indicated a high level of economic necessity.

Table 3

Correlation between the Age of the Respondent and Challenges Faced by Women Working in Night Shift

Variable	Correlation value	Statistical Inference
Physical Challenges	.221*	P<0.05 Significant
Psychological Challenges	0.006	P>0.05 Not Significant
Work-Life Balance	.197*	P<0.05 Significant
Safety and Security During Night Shift	0.091	P>0.05 Not Significant
Organizational Support	-0.1	P>0.05 Not Significant
Career Growth and Opportunities	-0.052	P>0.05 Not Significant
Economic Necessity	.222*	P<0.05 Significant
Overall Challenges Faced by Women Working in Night Shift	0.138	P>0.05 Not Significant

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Correlation is Significant at the 0.05 level

From the above table states that there is a significant relationship between age and physical challenges, work-life balance and economic necessity. And also, there is no significant relationship between age and psychological challenges, safety and security during night shift, organizational support, career growth and opportunities.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift.

H1: There is a significant relationship between age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift.

Result: The correlation test was applied with variables and it was evident that there is no significant relationship between the age and overall challenges faced by women working in night shift. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted by the researcher.

Suggestions Based on Research Findings:

Physical Challenges:

To overcome the physical difficulties of women working night shifts, organizations need to adopt ergonomic working conditions and periodic health check-ups for monitoring the health of the employees. Periodic short breaks and stretching exercises need to be promoted to overcome physical discomfort. Sleep hygiene awareness and provision of rest areas must be promoted by employers to minimize sleep interference. Healthy eating habits and nutrition guidance can help in the adoption of healthy eating habits. Access to gynaecological consultations, and stress management programs will also help overcome menstrual irregularities, ensuring overall health and job satisfaction.

Psychological Challenges:

So, to overcome these psychological problems women must get at least 7-8 hours undisturbed sleep by simulating night-like conditions using heavy drapes to block the sunlight. It is also suggested that women in night shift should try to restrict the use of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and chocolates. Yoga and meditation will prove beneficial for them, then organizations should place a high priority on mental health by providing professional counselling, and structured stress management programs. To overcome isolation, employees can schedule quality time with family and friends on off days or before/after night shifts, plan virtual catch-ups via video calls or group chats to stay connected. Organization can develop wellness programs that include mindfulness exercises, physical activity, and relaxation areas to help people feel less depressed. Employees can maintain personal relationships by promoting social engagement through team-building exercises and family-friendly gatherings. Furthermore, sleep quality and general psychological well-being can be enhanced by offering instruction on proper sleep hygiene.

Work-Life Balance:

To provide better work-life balance for night shift workers, organizations can family days to enable workers to spend quality time with their family members. Childcare and counselling can also assist employees in balancing work and family life. Moreover, fostering open communication with family members by engaging in interaction sessions can enable better understanding and emotional support and hence better well-being and stress reduction.

Safety and Security During Night Shift

By implementing stringent security protocols, carrying out frequent safety audits, and providing emergency response training, organizations can improve workplace safety. Safety will be enhanced by adding GPS tracking, extending CCTV coverage, and providing more transportation options at night. Regular POSH training, visible ICC information, and open talks about grievance redressal will enhance awareness. Night shift workers will operate in a safer atmosphere because to increased surveillance, stringent anti-harassment guidelines, and frequent security meetings.

Organizational Support

Organizations can enhance night shift worker support through conducting wellness programs, offering counselling facilities, and routine health check-ups. Providing proper amenities such as rest rooms, and regular breaks will enhance the comfort level and productivity of employees. Coordination of harassment preventive policies through regular updates, sensitization training, and anonymous reporting schemes will maintain workplace safety. Development of a congenial working environment can be achieved through effective communication between the management and employees through periodic meetings. Offering crèche facilities or childcare allowance can also assist working mothers to effectively balance professional and personal responsibilities.

Career Growth and Opportunities

Organizations can maximize career development opportunities for night shift employees through skill development courses, mentoring, and team-building activities. Virtual communication, leadership messages, and feedback sessions can maximize

dedication and career advancement. Employers must also provide equal opportunity development with promotions, professional development, and career advancement programs for night shift employees to ensure their career development and maximize workplace diversity.

Economic Necessity

To help employees and lessen financial stress, companies could provide financial wellness programs, night shift allowances, and competitive compensation. And organizations can improve financial well-being by offering improved compensation packages, rewards for working nights, and financial literacy initiatives to assist employees in efficiently managing their income.

Conclusion

Addressing the challenges faced by women working in night shifts require a comprehensive approach that includes workplace safety, organizational support, work-life balance, physical, psychological challenges, career growth and opportunities and well-being initiatives. By implementing these strategies, organizations can create a more supportive and inclusive work environment, enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity, and overall job retention.

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