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Impact of Shifts on the Family Duties, Marital and Children's Development

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Abstract : The article focuses on the marital life of night shift employees working in ITES companies at Chennai. These days a large number of employees work in shifts and the count keeps increasing. Married employees take up night shifts and other rotational shifts to earn more income as well as to lead a luxurious life. The article will explore the difficulties faced by the married employees in fulfilling their marital obligations. This article is an empirical paper which analysis samples collected from 100 employees working in nightshift at ITES around Chennai. The first objective is to understand whether night shift affects the employee's family commitments. The second objective seeks to explore if night shift disrupts the marital life of the employee and whether the relationship between the couples deteriorate. The final objective finds the impact of night shift on the development of children, relationship quality with children and academic performance.

Keywords : Marital life; marital stability; night shift; rotational shift; shift work; married employees.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current situation considering India there are relatively many people working in the ITES industry which is also called as BPO. The employees of ITES are required to work in the shift allotted by the appropriate country designated projects and hence many Indians work in shift work, some of them in permanent night shift. The problems faced by these citizens of India are unknown and the fact that marital discord doesn't exist can't be ruled out. The ITES industry expects the Indians to work round the clock 24/7 and hence night shifts are the most peak time to work for locations such as US and UK since it is more client centric. ITES being service sector it is very apparent that the 24/7 schedule plays a major part in disrupting the family life of the employee (Presser 2003).

Studies conducted by Grosswald (2003, 2004) show that there was dissatisfaction with family life and work life when couples work in non-standard schedules, though Tausig and Fenwick (2001) showed that working night shift had no effect. Though there are a lot of conflicting studies on the effect of night shift on the marital quality Davis (2008) found that the divorce rate increased when any one of the spouse works in night shift. In India situations are changing and there are many married women who also work in night shift while

their husbands take care of the household burdens and their children supporting Perucci et al (2007) statement that dual earners work in different shifts so that one of them are able to take care of the family responsibilities alternatively.

2. THEORY

It is a known fact that both men and women who are married prefer to work fewer hours and spend quality time with their spouse and children (Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg 1998). Presser has stated already that non-standard working hours could lead to dissatisfactory married life and even divorce (Presser 2000). The married couples do miss quality time and also the time they spend with their spouse and children is reduced drastically (Presser 2000). The shift the couple works at is associated with who takes care of the children. When the mother is at night shift the main responsibility falls on the father, but when both parents are employed in the same kind of shift, they rely on a caretaker to take care of their children (Presser 1994; Kingston and Nock 1987).

The bond between couples would increase unless there is enough physical presence and attachment between one another, but if there is no specific time for physical presence and attachment there is a possibility of interference (Hill 1988). It should be noted that when one of the spouse is made to work more hours and when there is overlapping of shift between the couples marital dissatisfaction occurs. On account of this the time spent by the couples is reduced causing an effect on the marital stability (Moen and Yu 1999). Presser (2000) has clearly found out that when one parent works in night shift the time spent together is less and this could be associated as one of the reason for work –family conflict leading to marital conflict. As per Staines and Pleck (1983) night shift and rotating shift interferes with the marital responsibilities and family responsibilities of the couples thus causing work-family conflict.

As per the study conducted by Hertz and Charlton (1989) among the Air force Security guards, it was found that men report a feeling of guilt that they are unable to spend quality time with their spouse and children. The study also stated that though the father comes back home after work, he is still unable to spend time due to the shift and tends to sleep at home. Depression among the couples is also associated with the shift they work in and this causes decreased marital stability. Women working in shifts are more affected according to Voydanoff (1988, 1989) since all the responsibilities of taking care of the family are on them. The women need to take care of the family as well as her job.

When a person works in night shifts it often leads to tiredness, stress and sleeping problems and this could have a negative impact on the relationship quality of the couples (Fenwick & Tausiq, 2001). Mott, Mann, Mcloghlin and Warwick (1965) studied that shift work reduced the happiness of the couple and the inability to coordinate family responsibilities. White and Keith (1990) found that family arguments increased when at least one of the couple works in a non-standard schedule.

A study conducted by Melinda Mills and Kadri Taht (2010) found that women working in non-standard schedule had more effect on the quality of marriage life and significantly higher levels of relationship conflict. The absence of women during the evenings which is the most important time for child care was affected and this spurred conflict among the couples. Melinda Mills and Kadri Taht also found out that when there is spouse support to work in shifts there is decreased marital dissatisfaction and the interviewees in the study maintained the importance of partner support to work in non-standard schedules. The study found that men who have wife working in night shift had to be supportive to their spouse in taking care of their family responsibilities and they were more involved in child care.

According to Joshi and Bogen (2007) women are less satisfied in their family when they have young children to take care and work in varied shifts. According to the Greenstein's (1995) review, he states two reasons for marital dissatisfaction. One is the employment of women can cause divorce as it goes against the tradition marriage norms and this make a man dissatisfied in his marriage. The second is that this employment of women could cause divorce in couples who are already having problems in their marital life. This brings us to understand that the 'absence effect' of women in the most important hours disrupts their normal family responsibilities causing chaos in the family.

Staines & Pecks time-dairy data analysis (1981) and Kingston & Nock (1987) clearly found that both parents who work in non-standard schedule spent very few hours together and this was linked to marital dissatisfaction. A study conducted by Presser (2000) found that non-standard schedules increased the level of marital satisfaction among the couples but under certain condition. The study clearly found that night and rotational shift had a greater impact on the marital stability of the couples.

Previous Studies

The study conducted by Susan Marie Jekielek (2003) explored the relationship between the married employees work schedule and the quality of their relationship. She compared couples who gave in regular day shift to couples where one person works in shift work. She compared both these sections based on the no of hours they work to the overlapping of schedules. The findings show that shift or non-standard work has harmful effects on the marital quality of couples working in different shifts than the couples working in day shifts.

Ariel Kalil et.al (2010) found that wives who worked in a permanent night shift caused more divorce and the divorce rate was more when a woman had children and worked night shifts. He also found that due to irregular sleep patterns and when the couple work in different shifts, it leads to physiological, Psychological and social stressors into the marital life. The main finding from his article is that work in general was an important criterion for a good marital life.

The studies conducted by lina Auvinen (2014) collected data from couples having young children and the questionnaire centered around questions on work schedules, marital quality, parental difficulties etc. 76 percent of the participants were female and 24 percent were male. The findings showed that the time spent by the couples together was very little or non-existent at all. The couples had the feeling that the work pressure was too much and hindered their marital relationships. The participants felt that shift work made them too tired and caused more stress in their family life. It was found that this tiredness lead to more conflict between the couples.

David J. Maume and Rachel A. Sebastian (2012) took the data from a larger longitudinal study effect of work schedules and stressors on family life. There was data on 599 members of a mid western chapter who worked in grocery and drug stores; here the members frequently changed their shift of working. They conducted the survey on 15 liker items based on questions such as marital satisfaction and marital problems; Sexual problems; marital interaction; marital disagreements; marital conflict and parenting. The study found that working non-standard shifts caused problem in the married life of the workers. The research found that men who worked in permanent night shifts had a bad marital relations with their spouses than the men who worked fixed day shifts and the analysis proved that women had lower marital quality when their husbands working in night shifts. The article also states that when women work in night shifts it is difficult to take care of the children resulting in more chaos.

3. OBJECTIVES

- a) To understand whether night shift affects the employee's family commitments.
- b) To explore if night shift disrupts the marital life of the employee and whether the relationship between the couples deteriorate.
- c) To find the impact of night shift on the development of children, relationship quality with children and academic performance.

Research Hypothesis

The researcher chose the following hypothesis for the study of night shift's impact on the marital life of the employees. The hypothesis was intended to study the negative impact on the family duties, marital stability and growth of children. Since data was collected from both male and female, the article studied the difference

of opinion between the male and female with regard to the impact of night shift on the marital life. Thirdly the researcher focused on understanding whether there is any relationship between the age of employees and the effect of night shift on their marital life. The article explores employee's thoughts on divorce occurring due to the effect of night shift and the difference of opinion between male and female. The relationship between the no of yrs in night shift and the family duties, marital stability and children growth was analyzed.

- H1 = Night shift has a negative impact on the family responsibilities, marital stability and growth of children
- H2 = There is significant difference between male and female with regard to the effect of shift work on family responsibilities, marital stability and growth of children.
- H3 = There is significant difference between age of the employees and the effect of night shift on the family responsibilities, marital stability and growth of children.
- H4 = The opinion regarding the question "I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce is above the average level "
- H5 = There is a significant difference between male and female on the question "I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce"
- H6 = There is a relationship between the no of yrs worked in night shift and the effect of night shift on the family responsibilities, marital stability and growth of children.
- H7 = The opinion regarding the question "My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at night" is above the average level "
- H8 = There is a significant difference between male and female on the question "My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at night".
- H9 = There is significant correlation between family duties, marital stability and growth of children.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study came from a larger population of employees working in the night shift. A total of 120 employees were targeted out of which 100 samples were selected for this empirical study. The questionnaire method was used for collection of data. The questions used by the researcher were based on previous questionnaires and articles. A set of 20 questions were included based on family duties, spousal relationship and children growth. The data was collected through the simple random sampling method wherein all the employees working in ITES around Chennai were eligible for the study.

The respondents in the survey were mostly in the age group of 25 – 55 and the data comprised of both male and female employees working in night shift. Most of the respondents in the survey have been working in night shift for more than 2 years. The questions triggered the problems faced with regard to the family responsibilities and whether the employees are able to balance their work as well as marital life. The questions were also about the employee's relationship with their spouses to analyze if the couples are facing conflicts in their marital life. In Previous studies Iskra-Golec et al. (1996) and Tausiq and Fenwick (2001) showed that there was no effect of late shift on the family life, still none of this study specifically concentrated on how night shift effects the marital stability of the employees.

Respondent Information

The respondents were in the age group of 25-35 (63%), 36-45 (29%), and 46-55 (6%) and above 55 (2%). The respondents comprised of 72 males and 28 females. The respondents were taken with experience in night shift from less than 1 year to above 7 years. 11 % of the employees have experience of less than 1 year, 26 % of employees have experience from 1-3 years, 47 % of employees have experience from 4-7 years and 16 % have experience of more than 7 Years.

The researcher uses reliability analyses test to check the validity of the variables.

Reliability Analysis Test

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.961	20

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Measures of the study

The findings show that the *p* Value is less than 0.01 which means that the three scales are not equal to the average level and above the average level concluding that there is a negative impact of night shift on the Family duties, spousal relations and children growth.

Table 2

T-test was conducted to find out the Mean of the 3 scales Family Duties, Spousal Relations and Children Growth

	<i>N</i>	<i>t Value</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>p Value</i>
Family Duties	100	31.504	21.3500	6.77693	.000
Spousal Relationship	100	33.860	24.4900	7.23277	.000
Children Growth	100	29.367	15.2200	5.18268	.000

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work – family conflict “as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are incompatible in some respect. In the model Greenhaus and Beutell explained that non-standard work schedule, night shift, shift work leads to work-family conflict.

Table 3

Levene's test for equality of variances was analyzed to find out if there is any significant difference between male and females with regard to night shifts effect on the family duties, spousal relations and children growth

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>P value</i>
Family Duties	M	21.8611	6.81611	1.212	0.228
	F	20.0357	6.61358		
Spousal Relations	M	25.6944	6.61547	2.758	0.007
	F	21.3929	7.93184		
Children Growth	M	15.4444	5.19721	0.693	0.490
	F	14.6429	5.19412		

From the above table it is understood that the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level showing no significant difference between male and female with regard to the effect of night shift on the family duties and children growth as the p value is less than 0.05. As the trend is changing both men and women have begun to support one another working in different shifts but according to Zioli-Guest & Kalil (2006) men doing the female work like cooking and cleaning leads to negative psychological health however the perception of both male and females in this study are almost the same when asked about the effects of night shift on the marital life.

Since p value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level showing a significant difference between male and female with regard to the effect of night shift on Spousal Relations. From the study we note that the views of Male and Female with regard to the effect of night shift on spousal relations differ as the mean for male is 25.6944 and female are 21.3929.

Table 4
Kruskal Wallis test was used to know whether there is any significant relationship between the age of the employees and the effect of night shift on their marital life

<i>Kruskal Wallis Test</i>			
	<i>Family Duties</i>	<i>Spousal Relations</i>	<i>Children Growth</i>
Chi-Square	10.093	7.991	16.568
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.018	.046	.001

Since the p value for family and spouse is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level, hence concluding that there is significant relationship between the age of the employees and the effect of night shift on the marital life.

Since the p value for children growth is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level, hence concluding that there is significant relationship between the age of the employees and the effect of night shift on the marital life. White and Keith (1990) used demographic variables and job characteristics to study the effects of shift work on marital quality like no of years employed family income etc.

Table 5
 t -test was conducted to find the significant level of Question “I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce”

	<i>N</i>	<i>t Value</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>p Value</i>
I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce.	100	22.733	2.96	1.302	.000

Since p value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance hence conclude that the opinion regarding “I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce” is not equal to average level. Based on mean score of 2.96, the opinion regarding night shift as a factor for divorce cannot be ruled out since the mean is above the average level.

According to the studies conducted by Bond, Galinsky and Swanberg (1998) employees who work in shift work have more divorce rate. Employees who work in night shift or shift work would have more arguments and conflicts. Childrearing becomes a problem; there is less conversation between the couples as well as lack of affection (Jekielek, 2003)

Shift work could be the cause for strained relationship between couples because of the sudden change in responsibilities causing so much of stress, guilt and other physical and psychological problems (Mills, That, 2010).

Table 6

T test was conducted to find the difference of opinion between male and female with regard to Question “I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce”

	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t value</i>	<i>p value</i>
I feel night shift in general could be one of the factors that lead to divorce	M	3.08	1.264	1.529	.330
	F	2.64	1.367		

Since *p* value is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance hence conclude that there is no significant difference between male and female with regard to the opinion on the question regarding night shift as a factor for divorce. This highlight that both male and female feel that night shift could be a factor that leads to divorce. According to Presser (2000) working fixed night shifts made the divorce six times more than the normal day shift. Among the women employees with children, the divorce rate increased by three times and might have an effect during the earlier years of marriage.

Table 7

Kruskal Wallis test was used to know whether there is any significant relationship between the no of years the employees worked in night shift and the effect of night shift on their marital life

<i>Kruskal Wallis Test</i>			
	<i>Family Duties</i>	<i>Spousal Relationship</i>	<i>Children Growth</i>
Chi-Square	4.929	2.811	9.359
df	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	.177	.422	.025

Since the *p* value for family duties and spousal relationship is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level, hence concluding that there is no significant relationship between the no of yrs worked in night shift and the effect of night shift on the marital life of the employees.

Since *p* value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 % level, hence concluding that there is significant relationship between the no of yrs worked in night shift and the effect of night shift on the marital life of the employees.

Table 8

***t* test was conducted to find the opinion on question “My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights”**

	<i>N</i>	<i>t Value</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>p Value</i>
My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights	100	35.179	3.29	.935	.000

Since *p* value is less than 0.01 the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance hence conclude that the opinion regarding “My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights” is not equal to average level and above the average level.

Based on mean score of 3.29, the opinion regarding “My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights” is well understood as a factor that there is insecurity in the minds of the children. Employees working in shift work may not be successful in parenting since the working hours make it difficult for the parents to monitor and discipline their children (White and Keith, 1990). The time children spend with their parents is most important to build a good relationship.

If the relationship is missing the children face behavioural problems and when the parents are not available at the required time, the insecurity creeps up in the children. According to Wen-Jui Han and Liana E.Fox (2011) stressed the importance of child well-being through the child – parent relationship, environment at home, and the activities after school, these all can be affected due to parental shift work. He said that a comfortable work environment, supportive family, frequent family activities creates a secured feeling at home.

Table 9
t test was conducted to find the difference of opinion on question “My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights”

	Gender	Mean	SD	t value	p value
My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights	M	3.28	.938	-.209	.835
	F	3.32	.945		

Since *p* value is greater than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance hence conclude that there is no significant difference between male and female with regard to the opinion on the question regarding “My children exhibit insecurity when I am not there at nights”.

This highlights that majority of the male and female feel that children exhibit feeling of insecurity when they are not in the nights. There are a number of studies that show the importance of strong parent child relationship to safeguard them from risks (Crouter & Head, 2002). According to the model given by Galinsky (1999) non-standard work schedules are associated with negative outcome for both parents and children including insecurity, freedom and decreased family friendly relationship. The model portrays exactly what takes place at work and what takes place at home, it clearly depicts that night effects parents well being as well as children too.

Table 10
Pearson’s correlation test was conducted to find the relationship between the variables comprising of family duties, spousal relationship and children growth.

		Family Duties	Spousal Relationship	Children Growth
Family Duties	Pearson Correlation	1	.886**	.822**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	100	100	100
Spousal Relationship	Pearson Correlation	.886**	1	.745**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	100	100	100
Children Growth	Pearson Correlation	.822**	.745**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100

It was found that all the three variables are correlated with one another hence concluding that there is a strong correlation between the variables. The correlations are significant at 0.01 at 1 % level. This shows that all the three variables are of significantly associated with one another and all variables are equally important. Husbands and wives who work require good quality of marriage, family life, since both parents are totally engrossed in their work life all these factors family duties, Spousal relationship and children growth are affected (Cherpas, 1985). According to Kalliath et al.(2011), Role strain theory describes that social structure comprises of various roles and the parents are sometimes unable to perform all the functions of the family due to their work schedule. The role theory states that this family work conflict is the cause for disharmony, conflicts and tension in the married life.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The article studied the effects of night shift on the marital life of employees working in ITES, Chennai and brought about relevant conclusions and suggestions. The article aimed at knowing the difficulties faced by the employees with regard to family commitment, Spousal relations and Growth of children.

Questions such as marital obligations, family responsibilities, quality of family life were put forward to the employees. Most of the employees have stated that they are unable to fulfill their family obligations and face frustration. The respondents feel guilty that they are not able to take care of their family and not able to spend quality time with their family. Though, many of the respondents are able to take their family on vacations still that is lacking. The study was neutral on the query if they would like to shift their work to a day shift Job. Future research can explore the shift patterns effect on the family commitment of the employees working in ITES, India.

The article explored whether there is a good relationship between the couples who work in night shift. The study found that many employees had stated that night shift causes rift and arguments and their spouses aren't happy about the shift hours. The respondents felt that the emotional intimacy with the spouses is neglected due to the different working hours. The respondents also felt that night shift can be a factor for divorce. The future research can do a more intense study on the effect of shift work on the divorce of employees.

There were varied opinions on effect of night shift on the growth of children and felt that the relationship quality with the children is neglected not allowing them to monitor the children's academic performance. The children felt insecure because of the odd working hours of the parents.

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