



## STRESS MANAGEMENT:SOURCES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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### **Abstract**

*Stress — just the word may be enough to set your nerves on edge. Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can be defined as the brain's response to any demand. Many things can trigger this response, including change. Changes can be positive or negative, as well as real or perceived. Stress is a fact of nature which forces from the internal or external world affecting the individual. Stress management is an important part of maintaining good physical and emotional health and healthy relationships with others. This study is an attempt to review on stress management in various fields like banking, information technology, insurance and teaching profession. The study is based on secondary data. In this regard various libraries were visited and some on-line journals were also reviewed in this direction. The study further attempts to put forward suggestions which would help the upcoming researchers to apply stress management techniques in the field of social science.*

**Keywords: Stress, Stress Management, Problems and Research.**

Stress is a normal part of life but it is important to strike a balance between productive stress and unproductive stress. Psychologist Hans Selye (1946), the founder of the theory of stress defined stress as the nonspecific response of our body to any demand for change (cited in Le Fevre et al.,) Stress has become an inevitable part of our life. The word stress is derived from the Latin word 'stringere' meaning to draw tight. Stress has been associated with every human life. Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in life. Greenberg and Baron (2000) define stress as 'a complex pattern of emotional states, physiological reactions and related thoughts in response to external demands. Ivanchevich and Matteson (1993) define stress simply as 'an interaction of the individual to his or her environment'.

Occupational stress is widespread area where job related issues have examined occupational stress in a broad range of professional groups; for instance employees working in Information Technology, Insurance sector, Banking services, working women, Women Entrepreneurs, Teaching faculty etc.,. This paper presents the brief literature review of different research studies on occupational stress among various fields.

### **Information Technology**

A Descriptive research has been adopted to understand the concept of job stress and its impact on employees by **K.S.Satyanarayanan & Dr.K.Maranin** their study on 'Stress Management in IT Industry' through interview schedule. The total sample size for the study was 150 and data was analysed applied by using statistical tools like correlation, t-test. It was observed from the study that major factors contributing to stress are workload, vulnerability, low physical condition etc., and also found significant correlation between workload and emotional exhaustion. Based on the findings, researchers suggested to have relaxation activities, training programs, counselling sessions, physical exercise, brain storming games, yoga are some measures that help reducing stress among IT employees.

A random sampling method was used to conduct a study on job stress among employees of major Software Industries – Infosys, TCS and Cognizant Software companies by **T.Tirumaleswari** in Chennai to understand the level of job stress among the employees with a sample of 100. A well-structured questionnaire and interview methods were used to collect the data. Data was analysed by using percentage method and weighted average method was applied to identify most relaxation technique among the employees. It was found from the analysis that walking followed by sleeping, listening to music, and meditation scores as maximum relaxation technique. The present study has suggested that delegation of work, relationship between employees, proper grievance handling system, rewards for performance, time management etc., gives more relaxation for IT employees.

### **Insurance Sector**

To identify the difference in the perceptions of insurance employees according to their demographic profile, a study was undertaken by Sakkshi **Sharma, Rajvir Kaur** on 'The effect of Demographic factors on Occupational Stress: A study on Insurance sector' in Jalandhar city of Punjab with a sample of 374. Employees were asked to respond to 32 items of structured schedule with five point Likert-scale responses. The data was analysed by using SPSS. It was observed from the study that there is significant difference of age with leadership styles, difference in perceptions among staff, job pressure, lack of positivity ( $p < 0.05$ ). The respondents of age above 29 years, experience more stress than other age groups. The respondents having monthly income above Rs.50,000 experience more stress than those earning below Rs.50,000.



Respondents having more than five years of service predict high level of stress and higher level insurance employees experience more stress to middle and lower level of hierarchy. The present study was concluded that the more the age, length of service, monthly income and hierarchical level the more is the occupational stress and negative health consequences experienced by the employees of insurance sector. It is suggested that the organizations should enhance their focus at occupational stress managing interventions as it stimulates the employees to acceptance of goals, achievement of the targets, stay healthy and fulfil the objectives of the organization.

A cross-sectional survey design was used to assess the internal consistency of the Asset, to identify stressors for employees in an insurance company and to assess the relationships between occupational stress, ill health and organizational commitment, a study was undertaken on 'Occupational stress of employees in an insurance company' by **W.J.Coetzer and S.Rothmann** in South Africa. It was found from the study that job insecurity and pay benefits were the highest stressors apart from work-life balance, overload and job characteristics in the insurance industry. Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that cognitive structuring, time management, conflict resolution techniques may be directed to manage occupational stress in the insurance company.

A Comparative study of perceived stress of insurance, software and teaching professionals was undertaken by **Pooja Sharma and Hanisha Batra Bagga** with an objective to compare the perceived stress level of professionals from different sectors (Teaching, Insurance and Software). Data was collected from 60 professionals and analysed by applying t-test to examine stress of individuals from different professions. It was found from the study that teachers were the most stressed professionals when compared to insurance and software professionals.

To address issues of recruitment, retention and turnover of sales force in insurance companies and to integrate them to Maslow's Need Hierarchy, a survey was conducted by Suman Pathak & Vibhutipathi among 350 employees to analyse factors that influenced their decisions and job satisfaction. Survey reveals that primary needs, social and esteem needs are the major influencers of job satisfaction. Few measures like variable pay package based on performance, working from home, sponsored vacations and job rotation are suggested to reduce stress levels.

#### **Banking Sector**

'A study on stress management among the employees of Banks' was undertaken by **Nirmala.R.** With an objective to provide insight that will help researchers to improve management competencies in managing stress in the workplace. It was found from the study that lack of quality in work puts more stress on employees apart from work overload. Non achievement of targets, imbalance between work life and personal life, conflict among the employees also leads to stress among employees. The study suggested some measures like having positive attitude, exercise; meditations will be helpful for coping stress.

**Tilottama Azad** undertaken a study on 'Managing Stress among Banking Sector employees in Bhopal' in Bhopal to determine the cause-effect relationship between factors causing stress and their impact on bakers personal life and health. Employees from public sector banks in Bhopal were selected for the study. A structured questionnaire was distributed and data was collected from 100 respondents. Based on the analysis, it was found that 90% of the respondents believed that there is high level of stress among employees due to professional and personal reasons. Over workload, work life imbalance is major attributes which contributes to stress for employees. It is the suggested from the study that meditation was found to be the integral part of life to reduce stress.

To determine the cause-effect relationship between factors causing stress and their impact on bakers personal life and health, a study was undertaken by **P.Kannan and Suma.U** on 'Managing stress among Co-operative Bank Employees' in Palakkad District with a sample of 100. Majority of the respondents were feeling stressed due to excess of workload (32%) and inefficiencies of time management (19%). Apart from these, severe work pressure and having multiple roles and responsibilities, time are another important factors which causes stress among bank employees. The study suggested some initiatives for handling stress levels such as meditation and yoga, effective communication, recognition and reducing responsibility.

#### **Teaching Faculty**

A study was undertaken by **G.Lokanadha Rejddy and R.Vijaya Anuradha** on 'Occupational stress of Higher Secondary teachers working in Vellore District' with an objective to develop a tool to assess the level of Occupational stress of higher school teachers. Statistical techniques like SD, Mean, t-test, F-tests were applied for a sample of three hundred and twenty seven teachers from Vellore District in Tamil Nadu by using simple random sampling technique and administered with an Occupational Stress Rating Scale. From the results, it was found that majority (88%) of higher secondary teachers are experiencing moderate and high levels of occupational stress. The study suggested some measures such as improving self-



esteem, emotional intelligence, build self-confidence, develop good sense of humour, practice yoga, exercise and meditation regularly to cope up with occupational stress.

A study was conducted among faculty members of the private Universities of Saudi Arabia to explore the faculty perception towards occupational stress using established questionnaire by **Adnan Iqbal and Husam Kokash**. Questionnaires were distributed to five departments namely marketing and management, Finance and Accounting, Computer Sciences, Information system, and English departments by using snowball non-probability sampling method and collected data from 68 respondents. Based on the research findings, it was found that majority of the stress derives from inadequate rewards, insufficient recognition, inadequate time, heavy workload, resolving differences, high self-expectations and conflicts with students. Through this study, it is suggested that University administration should focus their attention on student interactions and professional identify to reduce the stress among faculty members. It is also suggested to the faculty members that regular exercise, managing time, spending time with family increases positive impact on occupational satisfaction.

To understand the phenomenon of stress and stressors among academic faculty members and to find out the organizational approaches to combat stress operatively and strategically in high educational institutes in India, a study was undertaken by **Alka Shrivastava and Narendra Shukla** on 'Understanding occupational stressors and perceived organizational support among academic faculties of Higher educational Institutes in India'. Based on the literature available, the study was concluded that managing occupational stress should be taken as a primary strategic and operational concern in higher educational Institutes because of the direct relationship between good employment practices and successful outcomes. It is suggested that mutual understanding between academic staff and management should be created and developed.

### Conclusion

After reviewing the literature on occupational stress, conclusions were drawn based on the findings in each field. They are as follows-

**Information Technology:** Most stress causing factors in this field are workload, vulnerability, low physical condition emotional exhaustion.

**Coping Strategies:** Relaxation activities, training programs, counselling sessions, physical exercise, brain storming games, yoga, walking, sleeping, listening to music, and meditation scores as maximum relaxation technique. Delegation of work, relationship between employees, proper grievance handling system, rewards for performance, time management.

**Bank:** Over workload, work life imbalance, professional and personal reasons, lack of quality in work overload, Non achievement of targets, imbalance between work life and personal life, conflict among the employees. severe work pressure and having multiple roles and responsibilities, time .

**Coping Strategies:** The study suggested some measures like having positive attitude, exercise, meditations, meditation and yoga, effective communication, recognition and reducing responsibility.

**Insurance Sector:** The more the age, length of service, monthly income and hierarchical level the more is the occupational stress and negative health consequences experienced by the employees of insurance sector. job insecurity and pay benefits, work-life imbalance, overload and job characteristics, primary needs, social and esteem needs are the major influencers of job satisfaction.

**Coping Strategies:** Organizations should enhance their focus at occupational stress managing interventions as it stimulates the employees to acceptance of goals, achievement of the targets, stay healthy and fulfil the objectives of the organization. Cognitive structuring, time management, conflict resolution techniques may be directed to manage occupational stress in the insurance company. Variable pay package based on performance, working from home, sponsored vacations and job rotation are suggested to reduce stress levels.

**Teaching Faculty:** Relationship, inadequate rewards, insufficient recognition, inadequate time, heavy workload, resolving differences, high self-expectations and conflicts with students were the most stress causing factors and the below are the coping strategies.

**Coping Strategies:** Mutual understanding between academic staff and management should be created and developed. regular exercise, managing time, spending time with family, as improving self-esteem, emotional intelligence, build self-confidence, develop good sense of humour, practice yoga, exercise and meditation.



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