

# Stress Management among Employees in IT Industry

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## ABSTRACT

Stress management is the act of avoiding stress and coping with stress response mechanisms better for the purpose of improving every day functioning. This article covers the concept of job stress, causes of stress, effects of stress and the effectiveness of various stress management programmes organized by IT companies.

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## 1. Introduction

**Stress management** is a broad range of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at reducing the person's level of stress, particularly chronic stress, usually for the aim of improving day-to-day functioning.

Stress generates several physical and mental symptoms which differ from each individual's circumstances. These can include deterioration in physical health as well as depression. The tactic of stress management is named as one of the keys to a cheerful and successful life in modern society. Although life provides lot of demands that can prove troublesome to handle, stress management offers innumerable ways to manage anxiety and protect overall well-being.

Indian IT sector has experienced a massive growth in post liberalization period. The IT concerns to attain their objectives try to exploit the human resources at their maximum. This creates psychological complications due to uncontrollable stress. Over 50% of the IT professionals are experiencing the difficulties connected to stress. The key reasons for the source of stress in this sector is the excessive work burden and over working hours

## 2. Objectives of the study

1. To realize the perception of job stress and its impact on employees.
2. To study the sources of stress among employees.
3. To study the effects of stress on the health of employees.
4. To study effectiveness of stress management programmes organized by the IT companies.

## 3. Review of literature

1. **Kavitha** in her research titled 'Role of stress among women employees forming the majority of employees at IT sector in Chennai and Coimbatore' (2012), has focuses on the organization role stress for the employees in the IT sector. She concluded in her research that, women face more stress than men in the organization and she observed that

married women face more stress compared to unmarried women.

2. **P.S. Swaminathan & Rajkumar S.** in their work on 'Stress levels in Organizations and their Impact on Employees' Behaviour' (2013) analyzed on the stress levels among the age group, profession, different varieties of jobs, working hours and the influence of work environment on the degree of stress faced by employees. This study indicates an ideal level in which each individual can perform with his full capability and identified 3 conditions responsible for work stress namely 1) Role overload 2) Role self-distance 3) Role stagnation.
3. **Amir Shani and Abraham Pizam** (2009) made an investigation on the depression of work among hotel employees in Central Florida. They have found frequency of depression among different workers in the hospitality industry by assessing the association between job-related stress and work characteristics.
4. **Viljoen and Rothmann**, have explored the correlation between occupational stress, ill health and organizational commitment (2009). Their findings indicate that organizational stressors lead significantly to health-related issues and low organizational commitment. Stress about secured nature of job attributed to both physical and emotional ill health. Low commitment towards the organization was projected by five stressors namely Work-life balance, Overload, Control, Job aspects and Pay.
5. **Schmidt, Denise Rodrigues Costa; and et al**, conducted a study on 'Occupational stress among nursing staff in surgical settings' evaluated the occurrence of occupational stress among nursing professionals working in surgical settings and examining the associations between job stress and job characteristics.
6. **Kayoko Urakawa and Kazuhito Yokoyam** in their study pertaining to Sense of Coherence (SOC) may Diminish the consequences of Occupational Stress on Psychological Health Status among Japanese Factory Workers (2009) have found in their results that

negative effects on the mental health due to the job demand and job stress was positively related with SOC, the status of mental health of males in administrative work was highly negative, whereas it was favourable among the female co-workers. Lastly, they explored that, SOC is a vital factor in influencing the management of job stress for both the genders.

7. **Urška Treven, Sonja Treven & Simona Sarotar Zizek** in their research work titled 'Effective approaches to managing stress of employees' (2011) have examined that, where the employees are highly stressed, they are not successful in their career. Various methods to combat stress, well planned work organization and good management are the successful ways of avoiding stress. They classified stress generally into three types such as i) Transient Stress ii) Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and iii) Chronic Stress.
8. **Khalid A.** in his study titled 'Role of Supportive Leadership as a Moderator between Job Stress and Job Performance (2012), have explored that, there is a linear association between anxiety and job performance in any organization. To enhance the job performance of an employee in a company an employee should gain adequate support from their superiors. Thus, a democratic leader can develop the performance of the subordinate even at adverse situations.
9. **Singh A. P. & Singh S.** (2009) in his research highlights on the concept of Job Satisfaction in the organizations. According to his view, Job Satisfaction is directly correlated to Stress and culture of work that an organization offers. He noted three sectors in which stress cultivate and broadly classified stress into two key types i.e. eustress and Distress. In addition, he describes the merits of positive stress and positive events for improved performance and satisfaction of employees.
10. **Pratibha G.** (2010) advocated the consequence of level of distress on the quality of life as adverse that may lead to serious burnout issues in private banks. The distress level in the banks can only be decreased to certain extent by various stress management programmes or interventions that helps to improve the quality of work life.
11. **Karthik R.** (2013) stated that employee's performance at work is influenced by stress that can be either positive or negative. The employee's performance is well if they face low to medium volume of stress. Hence, it intends at dropping the level of stress rather than removing the stress entirely.

#### 4. Causes Of Job Stress

1. **Career concern:** If an employee feels that he is assigned a lower grade job in the organizational hierarchy, then he might experience stress. If he looks that there are no chances for self-improvement, he may experience stress. Hence, unsatisfied job aspirations are the important cause of stress.
2. **Role Ambiguity:** It exists when an individual has inadequate information about the work role, work

objectives and responsibilities of the job. It generates ambiguities in the thoughts of the worker and leads to stress.

3. **Multiple Work Shifts:** it occurs when an individual is forced to work on multiple shifts. Employees may be given work on day shift for few days and then on the night shift. This change may generate complications in adjusting to the shift timings, and it can disturb not only personal life but also family life of the employee.
4. **Role Conflict:** It takes place when an individual in the particular role does not want to do the tasks because of conflicting job demands or when the job needs certain type of behavior that is contrary to the person's code of conduct.
5. **Job Demands:** Certain careers are highly challenging compared to others. Jobs that include threats and hazards are highly stressful. Research results show that job that involve stress requires continuous monitoring of machines and devices, unpleasant working conditions, making decisions, etc.
6. **Autocratic decision making:** Many employees who are well experienced feel that organizations must consider them on the decisions affecting their jobs. In reality, the bosses never ask the concerned professionals before taking a decision. It inculcates a sensation of being ignored, which results in stress.
7. **Work Overload:** Unnecessary work pressure produces stress as it places a person under heavy burden. Work overload may be broadly classified under two headings.
  - a. *Qualitative work overload* occurs when a person is executing the task that is complex or beyond the employee's efficiency.
  - b. *Quantitative work overload* is a result of innumerable tasks to be completed within a specified time limit.
8. **Work Underload:** In this situation, very little work or very easy work is expected on the part of the employee. Performing very little work or jobs of repetitive and easy nature would lead to monotony and boredom, which can lead to stress.
9. **Lack of Working Conditions:** Employees tend to face worst working conditions in the company in which they serve. It would consist of poor lighting and ventilation, unclean sanitation facilities, extreme noise and dust, existence of poisonous gases and fumes, lack of safety measures, etc. All these uncongenial working conditions produce physiological and psychological ill health in humans thereby causing stress.
10. **Lack of Group Cohesiveness:** Every team is featured by its cohesiveness, even though they vary broadly in its degree. Individuals face stress when there is a lack of unity among the group members in the team. This results in suspicion, jealousy, repeated quarrels, etc., in groups and this led to stress in employees.
11. **Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict:** These conflicts often happen as a result of variations in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs among

various individuals and groups. Such conflicts turn out to be a basis of stress for group members.

12. **Technological advancements:** When alterations take place, people should adjust to those alterations and this may be the source of stress. Stress is severe when alterations are substantial or special like changeover or implementation of modern technology.
13. **Lack of Social Support:** When employees trust that they have the companionship and assistance of other people at work, their capability to tackle the consequences of stress increases. If this type of social support is lacking, then a personnel experiences lot of stress.

## 5. Forms Of Stress

### **Acute stress**

Acute stress is the most prevalent type of stress. This category of stress takes place quickly with a change in the routine activities of a person. Acute stress is sometimes quite interesting in small cases, but too much of acute stress is tiresome. Acute stress is the way to make the person to stand up and take note of what is going on, to make sure that everything is correct

### **Mental stress**

Mental stress is the very basic form of stress. Intellectual thinking is very much affected by mental stress. A person who is suffered by the mental stress is unable to think appropriately or he is unable to gain proper concentration towards anything. Mental stress is an interruption of the rational and correct way of thinking. Mental stress is occasionally good for the reason that if there is a compulsion to do the work, then it can be completed very easily or smoothly.

### **Emotional stress**

Emotional stress is obtained by the product of both mental tension and mental pressure. When the mind of a person is experiencing lot of confusion then he suddenly becomes aggravated and shot-tempered. The person is not able to handle this kind of circumstances because both the brain as well as the heart are difficult to control.

### **Physical stress**

Mental and the physical stress affects the physical health of a person. This type of stress causes changes in the mannerisms of a person. Physical stress is connected to the response of the body to cause of stress and the other symptoms.

### **Eustress**

It is a kind of temporary stress that gives sudden strength. This form of stress takes place when the physical activities of the person are immediately increased. It is a positive stress that cultivates when enthusiasm and encouragement is required.

### **Job stress**

Job stress arises when the needs of the job is incompatible with the abilities, resources, or qualifications of the workforces. Job stress may lead to bad health in terms of

mental and physical stress also. Some of the grounds of job stress are as follows:

Excessive workloads, inefficient management, lack of maintenance of working relations, Blaming culture, Inadequate training, worst working environment, conventional information system

### **Chronic stress**

Chronic stress affects the body for a very long time. This kind of stress is realized by someone who constantly faces changes in job.

### **Hyper stress**

If an individual is forced beyond what one can manage, which turns out to be Hyper-stress. In most cases it happens as a result of severe workload or over work. This form of stress arises because of persistent unbearable monetary difficulties, work both at home and office, endless tension, travelling day and night etc.

### **Hypo stress**

It is the contradictory to the hyper stress. This kind of stress is handled by people when they always feel bored, perform similar work again and again, work continuously without taking rest and absence of inspiration.

### **Episodic Acute stress**

Episodic acute stress affects those persons who suffer from acute stress very often. People who are the sufferers of stress are always seem to be in a hurry, they take anything seriously and not in a position to join themselves to deal with demands and pressures.

Episodic Acute stress may disturb interpersonal relations and can make persons aggressive towards others resulting in corrosion of relationships at home and the workplace. Its warning signs include continuous over stimulation, prolonged tension, headaches or migraines, hypertension and chest pains. Episodic acute stress can be kept under control with some alterations in the lifestyle but an expert assistance may also be required before any chronic problems develop.

### **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**

**Post-traumatic stress (PTSD)** is the stress associated with frightening or distressing events. This may include shocking experiences from someone's childhood, wars, poverty, sexual or violent abuse. Those who suffer from PTSD inclined to feel on edge and can recall shocking events through dreams and memories. They fight with concentration and face trouble while sleeping. Sufferers have strong feelings of guilty, emotional detachment, continuous worry and depression. Symptoms related with PTSD can often be very severe and have a huge adverse impact on a person's everyday life. (Through the weakening of physical health and mental attrition)

## 6. Stress In IT Sector

An increasing number of IT employees have been finding it problematic to face emotional stress according to experts. They emphasize that job-related threat stress needs to be given proper attention without delay. Regular job-

related problems such as wrist problems due to continuous handling of mouse, disc prolapse and eye sight problems are the common issues faced by the employees currently. However, facing stress that cultivates due to fear of losing job or to manage the growing competition affects the employee's performance, finally taking a significant impact on the physical well-being

## 7. Methodology of the study

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.

## 8. Suggestions

The following steps may be applied to manage stress in this field:

- a) **Meditation, rest and exercises** are some of the stress management techniques followed in this field. Most employees work on night shift in this particular field and lose their regular sleep. Healthy diet may be maintained for stress relief. Yoga practice may also be given in order to avoid stress in IT companies.
- b) **Adopt a healthy life style:** The best alternative to stress is to maintain the healthy lifestyle. Some of the therapies to keep a good health are: 1. Practice meditation and yoga 2. Physical exercise 3. Long walking with friends 4. Preventing smoking & drinking 5. Listening to music
- c) **Offering suitable training to the employees:** There are various training institutes for most of the IT companies. Thus, this prevents to produce the stress in the employees because suitable training has been given to the employees thus, they will be able to know what is the work that have to be done in the company.
- d) The company can go for some relaxation activities or programs for employees in order to reduce the tension of the employees

- e) The Company should activate programs to increase the skills of the employees
- f) Organization should offer welfare programs
- g) The organization can reduce the workload by giving shifts
- h) Company should train their IT personnel in decision making in crucial situations.

## 9. Conclusion

With growing difficulty in our lifestyle, the stress level has been mounting at an outstanding rate. The reasons attributable to stress not only vary between cultures but also within the culture itself; from a cultured industrial society to foragers and from upper class within the same society. The various researchers found that stress management is a crucial factor for an employee. The employees should try to help themselves to keep themselves fit devoid of stress. The various contributing factors and related features for stress found are the sources of job stress that is linked to job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction is directly related to stress and work pattern of organization, significant correlation exist between organizational environment and job stress, higher stress is directly related to quality of work life of IT employees, direct correlation between stress and job performance, married women face more stress when compared to men, companies having stressed workers are less likely to be successful in competitive market, relaxing training interventions helps in reducing stress, the other factors responsible for stress are role overload, role conflict and role stagnation, emotional intelligence plays an important role in lowering occupational stress, female employees are highly stressed when compared to male employees, organizational politics and bureaucracy are important reasons for stress, taking alcohol, using tobacco products in any way also lead to stress, impact of stress level may lead to burnout and performance of employees influenced by stress are few aspects identified through the study.

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