

## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATIONS

<sup>1</sup>Sherry Sabbarwal, <sup>2</sup>Monica Munjial Singh, <sup>3</sup>Mohammad Amiri

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Coordinator, Centre for Social Work, Panjab University, Chandigarh;

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Centre for Social Work, Panjab University, Chandigarh; &

<sup>3</sup>Researcher, Centre for Social Work, Panjab University, Chandigarh, INDIA.

<sup>1</sup>sherrysabbarwal@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>mona13mch@gmail.com, <sup>3</sup>mohammad.amiri.qiau@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

*Now a days, the occupational stress is becoming an issue of concern for all types of organizations. Information Technology based organizations are not an exception in this regard. In Pune which is an IT hub, Information Technology (IT) sector is among the top ten workplaces in India where stress levels due to work are very high. Though, there is an adoption of modern technology and innovation in IT sector, employees have overload of work and are stressed out. Employees of IT sector are not able to cope with the new rapid changes in this sector which results in stress. Through this study, an attempt has been made to identify the causes of stress among the IT employees. This study highlights the impact of stress on the physical and psychological conditions of IT employees. Through this study an attempt has also been made to focus on the stress reducing programs (stress management) implemented by selected IT organizations. The result of the study shows that there are several causes of stress in spite of the efforts made to reduce occupational stress among the IT employees. This study indicates that, majority of employees faced physical as well as psychological stress due to heavy work load.*

**Keywords:** Occupational stress, Stress management, Types of stress

### INTRODUCTION

Productivity or work performance of employees is the most significant factor in the growth and development of any organization. The work performance is concerned with physical and psychological well-being of the employees. The IT sector organizations have been facing many challenges in this context. Occupational stress cannot be avoided on the part of the IT employees as the systems, procedures and advanced technology is getting complicated each day. Every employee cannot cope with such changes taking place in their jobs. This leads to arising of stress among IT employees.

In simple words the term “Occupational stress” refers to the strain from the conflict between external environment and the employee; leading to psychological and physical tensions at work place. Occupational stress at the workplace can make people dread walking into the office every day and makes employees worry about their jobs. Pressure at the workplace is something unavoidable due to the demands of today’s scenario of the corporate sector. With the problem of rising occupational stress among the IT employees, the ‘stress management’ has become a buzz word in almost every IT organization. Stress management refers to the management techniques, well-being programs for employees, psychotherapies etc. The stress management techniques can prevent and reduce stress levels of employees’ physical body and psychology; and thereby improve day to day activities of the employees at the work place and in the family also.

The present study focuses on the causes and logical reasoning for Physical / Psychological impact of stress on the IT employees and focuses on the important stress management programs implemented by the selected IT organizations of Pune.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Information Technology sector have an important place in the Indian Economy and as stated above, this sector is amongst top stressed sectors like banking sector, industrial sector etc. Occupational stress among the Information Technology employees, can affect their health, work performance, social life and family life and also on their psychological condition. Therefore, it is important to identify the exact cause of stress and its impact on the employee's physical and psychological conditions.. It is also important to provide an insight that will help the HR officials; management experts further improve their management competencies in the stress management in the IT organizations. Apart from this, the study is considered to be great significance because organizational role on stress is supposed to operate in interaction with the general ill-being and well-being.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Uma Devi T. (2011), has highlighted the wide spread silent problem by name 'stress' which caused for, acute dyfunctions, diseases and other harassments. Author has observed that, the occupational stress is found in IT employees because they are highly target driven and highly pressured on results. Through this study author has focused on the stress level of IT employees, identified stress management programs, Physical functions included in job design and life style modification programs, Spiritual programs. Author has concluded that, occupational stress problem become contemporary, being an occupational hazard in fast pacing IT profession needs to be addressed promptly.

K. Krushnamurthy and S. Prabhakaran, (2015), have highlights work stress among the IT employees in Chennai. Through the study authors have identified the various measures adopted by the IT organizations with a view to cope up with the stress level among the IT employees. Authors have also focused on the factors influencing the work stress perceived by the IT employees and the various factors concerned with stress prevailing in different levels among IT employees. Authors have thrown a light on the impact of work stress and stress management factors with organizational health factors towards IT employees. Authors have examined the comparative study on IT employees work stress. Authors have concluded that, various factors concerned with stress impact of stress in the family, work and individual, management of stress factors and organizational health factors. Authors have further concluded that, overall IT sector of Chennai is more stressful and aged employees are having more stress factors concerned with stress factors organizational personal health and psychological health.

Anuradha Nakka and N.V. Naidu, (2016), have provided an overview of the challenges and stress observed by IT women employees. Through the study authors have highlighted the coping strategies that can be selected to further corporate journey to gender inclusion and the advancement of women employees in the IT organizations. This study focused on the level of stress among the women employees in IT organizations in Vishakhapatnam. Authors have opined that, IT organizations have to understand the requirement of controlling stress among women employees to make the working environment conducive which can retain skilled IT women employees in the organization for a longer period. Through the study authors have observed that in majority of IT organizations, there are a poor working conditions, heavy workload and lack of employees' participation in management. K.V.D. Prasad, R. Vaidya and V.A. Kumar, (2016), have focused on the occupational stress and throw a light on a

comparative analysis of causes of stress among the employees and its impacts on the work performance of the employees of International Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and the employees of Information Technology sector. Authors have observed that, the effect of work stress on the performance of IARI employees is moderate as compared with the IT employees. Authors have observed that, there is a higher effect of work stress on IT employees. The results of the study indicate that, the work related stress in general and the stress factor job security in particular effects the employees' performance in IT organizations. Through the study authors have found that, health wise many employees of IT organization had developed chronic neck and back pain, an effect of long sitting hours at work.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To identify the causes of occupational stress among the IT employees;
- ii. To understand the nature of stress among the IT employees;
- iii. To understand the efforts made by HR departments of selected IT organizations for reducing occupational stress of employees; and
- iv. To examine the impact of occupational stress on physical and psychological conditions of IT employees

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature. It is descriptive in the sense that it gives a detailed description regarding the cause of occupational stress among the IT employees, nature of stress, impact of occupational stress on the physical and psychological conditions and the programs implemented with a view to reduce the level of occupational stress. This study is based on the primary and secondary information. The primary information was collected from selected IT employees through the questionnaire. The survey method has been used for the purpose of the present study.

#### Sample Selection

For the study purpose, 120 IT employees from 12 IT organizations (10 employees each from one organization that is  $12 \times 10 = 120$  employees) have been selected randomly. The samples of IT employees have been selected from the IT organizations located in Pune city.

#### Limitation and scope of the Study

- i) The present study is limited to focus on the cause, impact and nature of occupational stress among the IT employees only. It also highlights the various occupational stress reducing programs implemented by the management of selected IT organizations.
- ii) The scope of the study is set only for the IT organizations located in Pune City

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The following table indicates gender wise distribution of the respondents (IT employees)

**Table 1. Gender wise distribution of the selected Respondents**

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Male	71	59%
Female	49	41%
Total	120	100%

There were 59% selected male respondents and 41% of female respondents in the selected IT organizations.

**Table 2. Age wise distribution of the selected Respondents**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
25 to 35 years	69	58%
36 to 45 years	37	30%
46 to 55 years	14	12%
Above 55 years	-	-
Total	120	100

It is revealed that, majority of the respondents (58%) belong to the age group of 25 to 35 years. 30% respondents belong to the age group of 36 to 45 years and only 12% respondents belong to the age group of 46 to 55 years. No one above 55 years of age was interviewed. The following table indicates the various root causes of occupational stress among the IT employees.

**Table 3. Root causes of Occupational Stress among IT employees**

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Role Conflict	03	3%
Insecurity in job	07	6%
Low monetary compensation	04	3%
Heavy work load and long working hours	57	48%
Technological problem at work	-	-
Worries about family related matters	31	26%
Bad interpersonal relation	17	14%
Unpleasant working	17	14%
Not having occupational stress	-	-
Total	120	100%

As per the collected primary information, there are several factors which cause occupational stress among the respondents employees. 3% respondents were having occupational stress due to role conflicts or role ambiguity and due to getting low monetary compensation. Six percent respondents face work stress due to insecurity in job, the fears about the loss of their present job. Majority of the respondents (48%) were facing the problem of occupational stress due to heavy work load and long working hours. It indicated that, the issue of heavy work load is significantly related with occupational stress. 26% respondents were facing occupational stress because they always worry about the issues of their families. Due to family problems they cannot concentrate on their routine work and as a result occupational stress starts building. Due to unpleasant working conditions, 14% respondents were facing occupational stress, and 14% respondents were facing stress was due to poor or bad interpersonal relations at their work place.

**Table 4. Nature of Occupational Stress among the IT employees**

Nature of Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Physical stress	31	25%
Psychological and Mental stress	21	18%
Physical and Mental stress	68	57%
Total	120	100%

As per the collected primary information, 25% respondents are facing physical stress, 18% respondents are facing psychological or mental stress and majority of the respondents are facing physical as well as mental stress at their work place. Several efforts have made by the selected IT organizations with a view to reduce occupational stress among the IT employees. The following table indicates the efforts made by the IT organizations.

**Table 5. Efforts made by IT organizations for reducing stress of employees (multiple responses)**

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Training to management officials pertaining to expectations from employees	33	28%
Frequent launch meeting with employees	71	59%
Wellness programs and health care advocacy	109	90%
Implementation of attractive policies/ programs related to the family of employees	91	76%
Maintaining good interpersonal interactions at work place	106	88%
Effective communication system	87%	73%

28% respondents have stated that they provide training to the management officials with a view that they should think wisely about the expectations they have from their employees and should not expect high results, high targets etc. from the employees, which is helpful to reduce occupational stress. 59% the respondents have stated that, there is a frequent arrangement of informal launch meetings with their boss, which create a healthy atmosphere at work place and employees feel relaxed with their boss. In such informal environment employees can openly speak on any matter related to their work, family problems and their personal problems, which make them tensionless. 90% respondents have stated that, various wellness programs are implementing in their organizations for reducing the occupational stress, apart from the wellness programs, there is a implementation of attractive policies or programs which are related to the employee’s families, which also create a positive impact on reducing occupational stress, was stated by 76% respondents. A good and healthy interpersonal interaction at workplace has also created a positive impact on reducing of occupational stress, was stated by 88% respondents. 73% respondents have stated that, there are always efforts made by the management for effective communication with the employees, which creates a transparency in work and reduces the confusion of employees regarding their job. All the above stated efforts are certainly helpful in reducing the occupational stress among the IT employees.

The following table focuses on the impact of occupational stress on physical and psychological/ mental conditions of selected IT employees.

**Table 6. Impact of stress on physical and psychological/ mental conditions of IT staff**

Impact	Frequency	Percentage
Heart related problem	-	-
Ulcers	-	-
High Blood pressure	08	7%
Back pain and body pain	38	32%
Sleep disturbance	22	18%
Depression	07	5%
Moodiness	09	8%
Exhaustion	09	8%
Dissatisfaction towards job	24	20%
Workplace aggression	03	2%
Total	120	100%

As per the information provided by the selected respondents, it is found that, 7% of them were facing the problem of high blood pressure, 32% were facing continuous back pain and body pain. 18% respondents were having sleep disturbances. 5% were feeling depressed, 8% were having moody temper of mind or they are always in sullen mind set and 8% respondents were facing the extreme weakness or fatigue (Exhaustion) during their working hours due to occupational stress. 2% respondents have openly stated that, due to occupational stress they were always in a mood of quarreling with other people in the organization and 20% respondents have showed their dissatisfaction towards their current job. Majority of the respondents (32%) were having a problem of back and body pain due to the stress.

### OBSERVATIONS

- i. It is observed that, out of the total selected sample, majority of respondents are male employees and majority of them are in the age group of 25 to 35 years.
- ii. Majority of the respondents agreed that, heavy workload and long working hours and the worries about family related matters are the major causes of their occupational stress.
- iii. Through the study it is observed that, maximum number of employees in IT organizations have occupational stress. Some respondents clearly showed their dissatisfaction towards working condition at their work place.
- iv. It is observed that majority of the respondents are facing the physical as well as mental stress due to heavy workload.
- v. On the basis of primary information collected from the respondents some facts related to occupational stress among IT employees. These facts are pertaining to the family problems, insecurity of job, low monetary compensation, ill health etc.
- vi. It is observed that, in almost all the selected IT organizations' management have come forward with a several wellness programs for reducing occupational stress among their employees, but still there are maximum number of employees facing the occupational stress.
- vii. It is found that very few IT organizations have conducted training programs for the management officials. In majority of IT organizations there is an absence of training



programs pertaining to the implementation of programs for reducing occupational stress among IT employees.

- viii. It is observed that maximum number of respondents are facing physical and mental problems like high blood pressure, exhaustion, monotonous work, body pain, back pain, depression and sleep disturbances.

## SUGGESTIONS

- i. IT organizations should continuously provide the learning, mentoring, coaching counseling to their employees.
- ii. There should be arrangement of training programs for HR officials regarding the proper implementation of various programs for reducing occupational stress among their employees.
- iii. There should be opportunities to employees for self-development, time management to handle the responsibility of home along with office to encourage employees to accept higher responsibilities on new projects.
- iv. HR officials should try to understand the problems of employees if any and try to solve the problems with a view of reducing occupational stress.
- v. It is significant to focus on the measures for reducing occupational stress as well, than to understand the reasons of occupational stress alone. There should be a correct balance between good stress and bad stress.
- vi. There should be frequent arrangement of meditation programs for employees which will be helpful for coping to their occupational stress.
- vii. There should be priority for the health of employees.
- viii. Every IT organization should frequently conduct stress control workshops for the employees.
- ix. There should be arrangement of stress management programs focusing on employees' at all hierarchical level; so that every IT employee can get a time off from their busy schedule.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Anuradha, N., & Naidu, N.V. (2016). Stress management among women employees in IT sector industry: A study in Vishakhapatnam. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 2 (1).
- [2] Jain, P., & Batra, A. (2015). Occupational stress at workplace: Study of corporate sector in India. *Journal of Business and Management*, 17 (1).
- [3] Jayraman, M. (2011). *Occupational stress management*. Mumbai: Hansraj Publications.
- [4] Krishnamurthy, K. (2015). Work stress among the employees in information technology (IT) sector in Chennai city. *Asia pacific Journal of Research*, 1 (27).
- [5] Kumari, G., & Pandey, K.M. (2011). Studies on stress management: A case of Avatar Steel Industry in Chennai, India. *International Journal of Innovation Management and Technology*, 2 (5).
- [6] Prasad, K.V.D., Vaidya, R., & Kumar, V.A. (2016). Study on the causes of stress among the employees in the IT sector and its effect on the employee performance at the workplace, with special reference to International Agricultural Research Institute, Hyderabad: A comparative analysis. *International Journal of Management*, 7 (4).
- [7] Uma, D. T. (2011). A Study on stress management and coping strategies- with reference to IT companies. *Journal of Information Technology and Economic Development*, 2 (2).