

Occupational Stress among Working Employees in Organized Sector with Reference to Daman Area of a Union Territory, India

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Abstract

Present study is based upon explanatory type of research design as purpose is to conduct study & portray the various dimensions of problem in the light of occupational stress among working employees. Sample size consists of 430 employees (150 female, 280 male) working in Daman area of union territory Dadra Nagar Haveli, located in south Gujarat. This paper attempts to articulate the necessity to study organizational stress faced by employees. Responses are collected from 430 employees to understand various factors causing occupational stress in their lives. Overall result from the survey indicates that majority of the employees are experiencing stress which is due to factors like training and development, job demands, overall organizational climate and other factors. Major stressors affecting the life of employees are discussed here and so it is applicable to many industries as Employees working in textile, diamond, food, pharmaceutical and other industries are considered.

Key Words: occupational stress, job demands, work environment, organizational climate

Introduction

Occupational stress

Occupational stress is psychological stress related to one's job. It is a chronic condition. It happens when a person feels stressed due to the demands of the occupation. Occupational stress can be of three types: behavioral (e.g. absenteeism), physical (e.g. headaches) and psychological (e.g. depression, anxiety etc.). Stress is the natural outcome of today's busy and ambitious career and personal goals. Some common type of occupational stress is:

- **Workload stress:** This is the most common type of occupational stress. Employees experience workload stress when they are overburdened with work to be finished within the limited time frame. The employees are overwhelmed with targets which affects their personal lives.
- **Poor pay:** Many employees in Indian organizations are underpaid and get much less than what they deserve. It creates dissatisfaction and stress for the employees.
- **Role ambiguity:** Unclear job descriptions and poor communication create confusion and fear of failure among the employees. Effective training and development techniques can help to remove role ambiguity.
- **Physical stress:** Some jobs involve more physical activities which creates physical stress among employees. Heavy lifting, long hours of standing or exposure to harsh stressful situations create physical stress.

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- **Workplace environment:** Autocratic boss, non-cooperative colleges, workplace bullying or toxic organizational environment cause significant workplace stress. Harmonious workplace environment is needed to foster efficiency and effectiveness at workplace. Lack of appreciation, poor financial and non-financial rewards and lack of promotional opportunities brings dissatisfaction among the employees.
- **Job insecurity:** Concerns about job security, layoffs or job loss create substantial stress impacting overall well-being of the employees. Employees who are constantly worried about their jobs cannot concentrate on their work which affects their productivity at work.
- **Shift work stress:** Night and rotating shifts which can disrupt sleep patterns lead to mental and physical stress.

What is occupational stress? Stress is a natural phenomenon which occurs to every individual due to high expectations in the modern life style. Occupational stressors are working conditions that engulf the adaptive capabilities and resources of workers, resulting in acute to severe psychological, behavioral, or physical reactions. Prolonged exposure to a stressful situation may lead to mental or physical illness. In case of woman, there are bundle of responsibilities she is facing in her life. Even if she is professionally employed, she has to give more devotion and energy to household work also. That's why women are more stressed out as they face a big challenge in balancing the demands of professional and personal lives. In case of male, Indian males are main earning members in the major families. In this paper, we are discussing about the factors increasing stress in professional life of employees. In the beginning we have taken some demographic data.

Objectives

- This paper attempts to articulate the necessity to study the organizational stress faced by working employees.
- To provide ways to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of occupational stress by providing some suggestions.

Job stress can be conceptualized as in individual's reactions to work environment characteristics that appear threatening to the individual. It has been assumed by some to indicate a poor fit between the individual's abilities and the work environment in which either excessive demand are regularly made of the individual or the individual is not fully equipped to handle particular situation. The Research on "Working Women & Organizational Strategies in India" says that liberalization has resulted in increased employment of women that is casualized, unprotected, and insecure and offering very low wages. (Saxena Rashmi, 1997). Demographic variables such as age, gender, family size, socio-economic status, and tenure of employment may be useful predictors of occupational stress.

This article provides a brief overview of occupational stress as it affects working employees and presents some suggestions for reducing the negative effects of job stress.

Review of Literature

1. Mary Ann Haw(1982): Women, work and stress: A review and agenda for the future , This research paper discusses about the stressors that affect the life of a working women and also guides for the future course of action.
2. Santa Misra (2016): Occupational stress of working women in a specific culture : It is concluded that

occupational stress and the coping resources of women employees were significantly influenced by cultural values.

3. Pinchuk, Pishel, Polyvienina (2021): Occupational stress in healthcare during Covid-19 pandemic. This paper discusses about pandemic situation and its impact on occupational stress.
4. Alcides Moreno Forte, Lili Tian & E.Scott (2021): Occupational Stress and Employees Complete mental Health: A Cross Cultural Empirical Study: Given the shortcomings of previous research on occupational stress and mental health, in industrialized and rich countries, this study aims to examine the relationship between occupational stress and complete mental health among employees in China, Cabo Verde. It also explored the mediation and moderation roles of burnout and optimism.
5. K.Bhui,Sokratis Dinos, Magdalena Galant, S.Stanfheld (2016): Perceptions of work stress causes and effective interventions in employees working in public, private and non- governmental organizations: a qualitative study: it aims to identify causes of stress at work as well as individual, organizational and personal interventions used by employees to manage stress in public, private and non-governmental organizations.
6. Parvathy Mohan (2016): Occupational stress among women employees in Banking Sector: A study with particular reference to Kottayam district, UGC Grant Project. This project makes the comparison between women employees of different categories of banks like SBI, Canara, Federal and ICICI employees. The some main causes of stress as revealed by the analysis are: Having too much work, dual role of housewife and employee, change in the life style, ambiguity of nature of job role, increase in the number of customers, lack of power and influence etc.
7. Priya Makhija & Gajendra Naidu(2016): Occupational stress amongst women employees- A review of Literature. Main components of stress discussed in this paper are potential source of stress (stressors), factors of individual differences (moderators/mediators), and consequences of stress (strain).
8. The result of the study indicates higher level of stress found among the employees working in India. Also the gender analysis shows males were more stressed out compared to females in the age 20-40 years. The occupational stress is comparatively high in young generation compared to and it should be taken care to maintain mental balance and ensure efficient work output from them.
9. Jakkula V. Rao and K. Chandraiah (2012): Occupational stress, mental health and coping among information technology professionals. This paper talks about the stress. It has an adaptive value which motivates individual to attend to the task and complete the unattended work.
10. P.Landsbergis, Marnie Dobson, A.Lamontagne ,Bonkyoo choi (2017): Occupational Stress. The chapter on occupational stress describes the adverse effect of stress on the health of the workers. Also the influence of economic globalization, political systems, laws, government policies, and the changing labor market. Models of occupational stress are also discussed. Common occupational stressors like long working hours, shift work, precarious work and job insecurity, discrimination, work place harassment, effort-reward imbalance, impartial implementation of government laws, bullying etc. The health and safety consequences of exposure to occupational stressors are detailed, like musculoskeletal disorders, depression, hypertension, obesity, diabetes and other health concerns. The conclusion is proper job redesign, workplace policies, proper implementation of government laws and regulations can help to reduce stress.

Data and Methodology

- The present study is based upon explanatory and observational type of research design in the sense that the purpose of the study has been to portray accurately the various dimensions of the problem in the

light of occupational stress among working women. The purpose here is to conduct a study on various dimensions mentioned above. The sample size consists of 430 employees - 150 women employees and 280 men employees in the city of Daman located in southern part of Gujarat. The starting point for research was secondary data. Of course, the research plan is also supported by primary data. Primary data is more relied upon for interpretations. Surveys as well as personal interviews were conducted to gather necessary data.

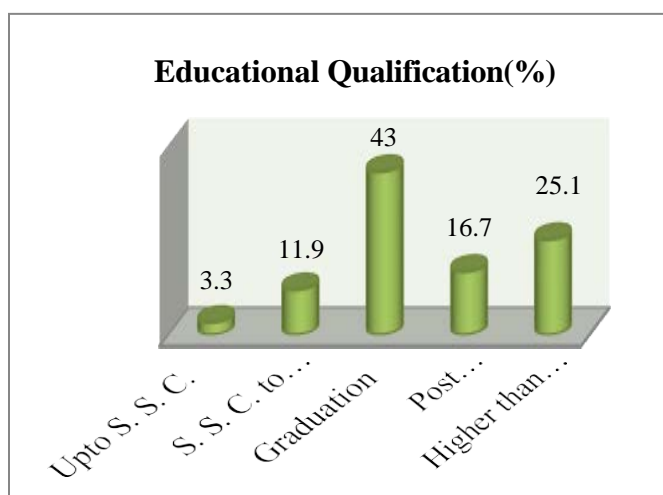
- A separate set of questionnaire was conducted for male employees and female employees. The conclusions are drawn on basis of data collected and summarized. The interpretations have been based on those conclusions drawn from the analysis of data and formal as well as informal talks with the workforce. The data were tabulated and suitable statistical tools such as percentages and averages were used for the analysis of data. Also the statistical method of co-relation was used to find the relation between various variables.

Table 1 Educational Level wise Respondents

Educational Qualification	Total Respondents
Up to S. S.C.	14
S.S.C. to H.S.C.	51
Graduation	185
Post-Graduation	72
Higher than PG/Double degrees	108

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Fig. 1 Educational Level wise Respondents



- Maximum number of respondents are graduates followed by multiple or double degrees. Every respondent had been to school and could read, write and do calculations.

Table 2 Working Hours wise Respondents

Working Hours	Total Respondents
Fixed-hours	322
Flexi-hours	108

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

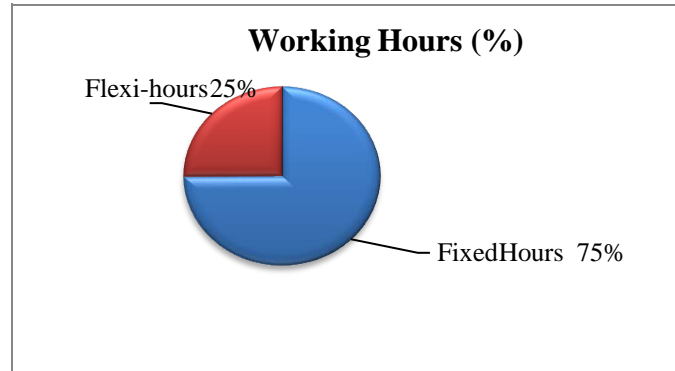


Fig. 2 Working Hours wise Respondents

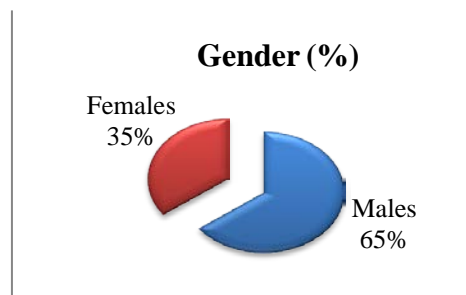
- 75% of the respondents have to follow strict time schedules whereas 25% have flexibility in time schedules.

Table 3 Male & Female Worker wise Respondents

Gender	Total Respondents
Males	280
Females	150

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Fig. 3 Male & Female Worker wise Respondents



- Though women have started plunging in to the employment market, a clear-cut gender inequality in terms of employment could be seen in the Corporate world.

Based on the responses from above respondents, for analysis, statistical tools applied and the

analytical results are tabulated in Table 4 as under.

Table 4 Factors Leading to Occupational Stress i.e. Major Stressors

Statements	SA	Agree	UD	Dis-agree	SD	Total	Valid	\bar{X}	σ	SKW	Kurtosis	Ranks
Job/task demand	11 (2.6)	152 (35.3)	36 (8.4)	141 (32.8)	90 (20.9)	430 (100)	430	2.66	1.228	.075	-1.429	8 th
Physical working conditions	90 (20.9)	189 (44.0)	11 (2.6)	114 (26.7)	25 (5.8)	430 (100)	429	3.46	1.254	-.454	-1.128	3 rd
Financial and economic factors	90 (20.9)	185 (43.0)	11 (2.6)	118 (27.4)	25 (5.8)	430 (100)	429	3.46	1.254	-.454	-1.128	3 rd
Partiality and bias	28 (6.5)	173 (40.2)	59 (13.7)	147 (34.2)	22 (5.4)	430 (100)	429	3.06	1.101	-.120	-1.204	6 th
Training & career development	91 (21.2)	260 (60.5)	41 (9.5)	10 (2.3)	25 (5.8)	430 (100)	427	3.89	.962	-1.535	2.642	1 st
Poor organizational climate	22 (5.4)	243 (56.5)	132 (30.7)	11 (2.6)	22 (5.4)	430 (100)	430	3.51	.860	-1.328	2.023	2 nd
Conflict and Interpersonal Issues	90 (20.9)	260 (60.5)	41 (9.5)	12 (2.8)	24 (5.6)	430 (100)	430	2.93	.880	.012	.349	7 th
Lack of Recognition and Reward	90 (20.9)	138 (32.1)	48 (11.2)	128 (29.8)	26 (6.0)	430 (100)	430	3.32	1.261	-.172	-1.277	5 th

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentages of the row total

Source: Various Questionnaires from Respondents

Analysis and Interpretations

- In the previous section we have done data analysis gender wise to find out the number of males and females working in the company. This would leave scope for the further research on gender wise analysis of stress experienced by employees. However, we have not much included in detail this part of analysis in the present paper. Data is also collected regarding fixed hours and flexible hours type of employees working in the organization to find out the connection between the working hours of employees and level of stress experienced by them. The result of Mann Whitney criterion showed that females are more stressed compared to males.
- The overall responses suggest that more than 50% employees are stressed out for major factors (statements) used for studying occupational stress.
- As clear from the table, training and career development issues are the major stressors for the employees followed by other factors like poor organizational climate, physical working conditions and like. Career aspirations of the employees have increased much irrespective of all sectors which is creating stress among employees. Some personal interactions with the employees revealed the fact (supported by survey) that training is not conducted at regular intervals and it is creating learning gap. Employees expect quarterly training session to be conducted in their own area of working. Well trained employees

are the most satisfied employees.

- Job and task demand holds 8th rank; it means they are the least stress giving factors to the employees among the eight factors responsible for increasing stress. The survey was accompanied by the interviews and observations, which revealed the fact that company had clear policy implementation and guidelines regarding job description and job specification. There was air of satisfaction among the employees in this aspect.
- At the third place are financial factors responsible for increasing stress among the employees. Financial difficulties are the main stress leading factor in the lives of many people. In India, 70% of the population belongs to middle class which usually comprised of service class. Family structure, loans, limited salaries, high inflation rate as well as increasing standard of living create difficulties in the lives of average people.

Other interpretations

- As clear from the table fig. 4 above, training and career development issues are the major stressors for the employees followed by other factors like poor organizational climate, physical working conditions and like.
- The overall responses suggest that more than 50% employees are stressed out for major factors (statements) used for studying occupational stress.
- Women have nearly achieved parity with men in terms of work force participation in the India. A result of this change is that women are now exposed to most of the same occupational safety and health hazards as men, including occupational stress. Occupational stress has become a common problem in the India.
- The conceptual literature on stress suggests that working women are prone to the same stressors experienced by working men. Yet, women are also confronted with potentially unique stressors such as discrimination, stereotyping, social isolation, and work/home conflicts. In addition, taking care of children and aging parents continues to be a source of stress for women who work outside the home (Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989).
- As per National surveys, more employed women than men have reported high levels of stress and stress-related illnesses, and 60% of the women respondents in one survey reported that job stress was their number-one problem. Occupational stress may be a particular problem for women.
- There is accumulating evidence that stress levels among professionals are increasing and that this is manifesting itself in the form of unsafe working practices, higher turnover, lower morale, and poorer performance. The results indicate that overall, men experience slightly higher levels of stress than women. Endurance capacity of women is more as compare to men. Although there are common sources of stress for both men and women, there are also some differences. In particular, men appear to suffer more stress in relation to risk taking, disciplinary matters, and implications of mistakes, redundancy, and career progression. In contrast, the factors that cause most stress for women were opportunities for personal development, rates of pay, keeping up with new ideas, business travel, and the accumulative effect of minor tasks. These differences reflect women's traditional and continued subjugation in the business world.

Effect on Health

- In the face of chronic job stress, an individual's deviation from normal functioning more often tends to move toward the dysfunctional side. Work-related stress affects employee's health with 50-80% of all diseases being psychosomatic or of a stress-related nature. This happens because most employees are extremely averse to chronic job stress that creates an uncomfortable situation in the work environment. Job stress has been labeled as one of the most serious occupational hazards of our time.

Causes

- Occupational stress is a growing problem in many workplaces and may be a problem of magnitude for working women, in part because of sex discrimination and difficulties combining work and family.
- More and more women are now plunging into professional fields. Their roles are now not restricted to house-hold as a result, women are now exposed to most of the same occupational safety and health hazards as men, including occupational stress. Occupational stress has become a common problem in the country.
- Although individual factors (such as coping strategies) and social resources can modify the reaction to occupational stressors to some degree, it is certain working conditions that place workers at risk for developing health problems.
- Stress can cause psychological (affective and somatic responses, job dissatisfaction), behavioral (sleep problems, absenteeism), or physical (changes in blood pressure) reactions. Prolonged exposure to job stressors may produce psychological and physical illnesses, such as depression and coronary heart disease. There is no evidence that a particular job stressor will result in a particular acute stress reaction or illness. Rather, a range of health symptoms can be associated with workplace stressors.
- These effects depended on the characteristics of the individual employee his/her family situation, and the complexities of job. The research indicates that these stressors may have a negative impact on health and well-being.
- This can be summarized as under:
 - ☐ Job satisfaction has positive impact on health of employee with respect to his/her desire for employment and her employment status.
 - ☐ Employment contributes to greater health benefits for unmarried women than for married women.
 - ☐ For married women, employment has more health benefits if their husbands and other family members participate more in household labour.
 - ☐ Work relationships that provide social support and social recognition appear to improve health. Recognition of the employees by their family members has favorable impact of their performance at the workplaces.
 - ☐ Those employees who were able to find match between their desire for employment and their employment status were found to be happy and cheerful. Their endurance was found to be more as compared to their counterparts
 - ☐ Nature of job i.e. heavy work-load, night shifts, continuously working with machines etc. increase health risks.
 - ☐ Barrier to career advancement owing to gender segregation is one of the reasons for employed women's deteriorated health. The well-known Framingham Heart Study showed that women's health may be jeopardized by such barriers (Haynes & Feinleib, 1980). One of the major predictors of coronary heart disease among female clerical workers was decreased job mobility. Furthermore,

women reported more job changes but fewer promotions than did men, indicating that their upward mobility may be severely constrained.

Major Stressors

- Organizational factor such as poor interpersonal relations, unfair management practices, discriminatory hiring practices are also some of the stressors.
- Job stressors commonly include job/ task demands including work overload or work under load, lack of task control, skill underutilization, etc.
- Physical working conditions such as noise, improper lighting, ventilation etc cause stress.
- Financial and economic factors such as inadequate salary, perquisites and other financial incentives.
- Sexual harassment at workplaces. Sex segregation of work roles creates further stressors unique to women.
- Training and career development issues. Discriminatory attitude towards male employees and female employees.
- Poor organizational climate i.e. conflicting values, conflicting roles, communication styles, inadequate delegation of authority and responsibility etc.
- Difficulties in matching roles at workplace and family.

Barriers to career progress as stressors

Male members are the main bread earners in their families in Indian society. That increases his responsibilities and stress in the occupation to make their families feel secure. They cannot remain unemployed as that devalues their status. This is the major reason of stress for male members in the Indian society.

Traditionally women are considered to be care taker of family. Her role and support in financial matters is treated as supportive and secondary. That is one of the reasons why they can't advance more in their career.

The pace of progress of employed women is generally found to be much lower than the pace of progress of employed men. While this is a potential stressor for all employees, it is particularly problematic for women because they are clustered in the lower levels of the hierarchy. For example, women hold only 2% of senior management positions and only 5% of corporate board positions (Friedman, 1988).). An explanation for this finding is that stereotypes and biases of male decision-makers prevent women's career advancement. The barrier formed by these biases has been referred to as the "glass ceiling."

Discussions and Conclusion

Previous studies on occupational stress showed how stress can lead to physical and psycho-emotional conditions in response to the unpleasant and overly complex challenges for employees. Indian organizations put lot of pressure on the employees. Targets, high expectations, humiliations are associated with the life of the employees especially in Indian organizations. India is high in terms of population where cheap labor is available in bulk. Talent hunting is an easier process in Indian industries. Vacancies get fill very soon with better and cheaper options. Bargaining power of labor is less and there is fear of

job insecurity. Organizations (whether business or other), employing people make policies which are employer friendly. Employee's voice is unheard and their grievances remain unattended. People are treated as tools and not assets. Some educational institutes show different salaries officially and pay less; the other deductions are also done. Monthly earnings are below minimum norms, most are working well beyond 8 hours per day and nearly three fourths can be fired anytime because they don't have any written job contract. There is shocking revelations from the government report that 71% employees do not have written job contract, 54% are not getting paid leave and over 57% in rural areas and 80% in urban areas work much beyond eight hours a day (article : Subodh Verma). The condition of labor is a great matter of concern in Indian industries. Long working hours, unusually high targets, bad working environment etc. are all responsible for stressed employees. Chronic stress results in health issues like high blood pressure, cardiac arrest and other health complications.

Employees spend major time of their life in their offices, companies and/or factories. Stressed employees may not much positively contribute to the growth of the company. Management should try to make their employees happy as happy employees are the most efficient employees. Stress brings negativity and so it should be avoided in both personal and professional life of a person.

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