

# **Work Place Stress Among Employees: A Literature Review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Work related stress is a common reaction that occurs when the work load increase and become excessive. Work related stress is a developing and legitimate issue in the present world. Occupational stress is a big problem for organization and individuals. It can cause high workforce turnover, burnout, absenteeism, ill-health, lowered morale and reduced efficiency and performance. Most of the employees are not aware that they are stressed. Unknowingly they may behave in abnormal way; this impact on their health and their performance. And management also neglects that stressful environment not only impact its employees but also it impacts productivity of organization. The stress may occur because of many factors such as organizational and personal factors. So the employer and employees both need to understand the importance of stress management. This paper tries to identify factors that contribute to stress, its impact on employees and organization and also to understand how the stress is managed and the role of organization in this regard.

*Keywords: Stress; Employees; Work place; Organization; Performance*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Stress is a type of mental illness and it is socially acceptable. Many researchers defined stress in their own way over the period of time. Occupational stress is a major problem for individuals and organizations. The stress may create negative results in employees in the form of absenteeism, lowered morale, bad health conditions, burnout, high workforce turnover and poor performance and lack of efficiency in work. When there is discrepancy between the work place environment demands and ability of an individual, which is required to fulfill the

demands of a job, the stress will occur. Many times it is observed that stress persuade the body to a react in the form of physiological and the individual can injure himself mentally and physically. The factors such as lack of autonomy, management behaviour, lack of opportunities or motivation to increase skill level, harassment, toxic work, unbalanced workload, extensive hours worked, isolation, ruined relationships among workers, contribute to work place stress.

U.S. Department of health shares it opinion on stress as it is emotional response and it is

harmful usually arise when the capabilities of an individual doesn't match with a job requirements, needs of the employee may be in the form of resources required to perform his/her job.

The term stress can be defined as interaction between individual and the situation. It is physical and psychological state that occurs when the individual doesn't possess the necessary resource to cope with the pressure and demands of the situation. According to Pappasolomou-Doukakis (2004) It is not necessary that stress always gives negative results, in some situation a appropriate quantum of stress is required, it will motivate the employee to complete his/her work. It acts as a motivator.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Gunnar Aronsson and Anita Rissler "Psycho-physiological Stress reactions in female and male urban bus drivers of Stockholm traffic in Sweden (1998)". The researchers carried a comparative study on Male and female drivers working in urban area driving in urban traffic regularly. The two aspects were focused Work condition and watching educational programme. For this study 10 full time male employee and 10 women employees were considered. The dependent variables such as Neuroendocrine, Blood pressure, Self-Reported mood and Work demands were considered. In study it was identified that noradrenaline, adrenaline and cortisol exertion level was significantly high during driving hours than comparison session (i.e. watching educational programme) among both male and female drivers and there were no significant sex differences in

self-reported mood during bus driving. The researcher observed that compare to male drivers the female drivers pay more price in psychological effort. So this provides the need for further study on gender differences in health and occupational stress.

Amat Taap Manshor, Rodrigue Fontaine, and Chong Siong Choy, the researchers (2003) in their paper titled Occupational stress among managers: a Malaysian survey, published in Journal of Managerial Psychology made an attempt to examine sources of stress among managers working in multinational companies in Malaysia. For the survey a sample of 440 managers were involved. The questionnaire was shared with managers of 34 MNC's operating in Malaysia. In the survey it was observed that there is strong link between relationship at work and working conditions and workload were the important factors which create stress among managers. It also revealed that some demographic factors also create stress. It was found that managers experience the stress predominantly because of the factors such as excess work load, working conditions, new technology, role ambiguity and conflict, risk and danger, video display terminal, relationships at work, and career development. Sergeant Corey Haines (2003) "Police stress and the effects on the family". The researcher carried the work to understand the blow of stress on families of police officers. The aim of this study is to recognize how the stress negatively affects families of police officers. The stress can't be separated from police job, but the researcher made an attempt to search the origin of stress and recommend strategies to reduce the stress. During the study the

author found that police officers are stressed mainly because of the shift work, low pay, and conflict with friends and family, supervisors, irregular sleep schedules. The researchers recommend conducting some training programs to create awareness about events which create stress, and create the ability to understand its impact. This will help them to handle the stress effectively. Some individual counseling session should be organised for the officers, and discussion during counseling should kept confidential. This will make them comfortable and they may open up and share their problems. Overall the outcome this study can be interpreted that stress is part of police job. The factors like work shift, poor pay, conflict among colleagues are the factors create stress. The proper training and counseling will help the officers to cope up with stress.

John L.M. Tse , Rhona Flin, Kathryn Mearns.(2006) “Bus driver well-being review: 50 years of research”. The authors carried the study by reviewing different research papers, for this purpose 27 important studies related to stress were considered. On the basis of this study the author identified that the nature of the job is the main reason for the ill health of drivers. In the study it is observed that the stressor such as physical environment, organizational issues and job design causes the stress among drivers. The moderator factor such as demographic factors (gender), Personality of the employees (Type A and B, Negative affectivity, hardiness) also responsible and causes the stress among the drivers. The effect of these factors can be experienced in the form of psychological, physical, and behavioural (substance abuse) disorder among drivers. Stress among drivers

causes ill health which badly impacts the organization performance by increasing labour turnover, more number of accidents, employee absence. The researcher found that along with the above mentioned stressors the passenger’s violent behaviour and heavy traffic, tight work schedules are compounding factors for stress among bus drivers. The authors are of opinion that bus operators should take some initiatives to improve work environment so that job stressors can be reduced. Further suggested to bus operators to work along with policy makers, trade unions, researchers, and bus drivers so that they can take some initiatives to safe guard the drivers form stress.

P.S. Swaminathan, & Rajkumar S. (2010) – “Study on Stress Levels in Organizations and its impact on Employees' Behavior”. Researchers carried a study that focused on the influence of work environment on the degree of stress faced by employees and different profession, age group, hours of work and different varieties of jobs. For the study 250 sample size was taken which includes Bank officers, Leaders in Business Organisation, sub ordinates in business organization and academicians. By this study some of the common factors such as meeting deadlines, coping with sudden changes, working with limited resource, and the standards and high expectations from the employees are also the factors which creates stress. The researchers found specific organizational role related stressors such as role overload, role self distance and role stagnation causes stress. Researchers suggest that each individual should frame his own methods or plans to deal with the stress. This

can be done by understanding events causing stress, identifying the reasons behind them such as family, or own expectations etc. Adopting good habits like eating healthy food, by doing regular exercise, taking sufficient rest, proper time management.

Ipseeta, Patnaik and Mitra (2014) the researchers conducted study to identify impact stress on IT employees. According to the researcher the stress is the main cause for behavioral consequences which may be experienced in the form of more dependence, less attention to family members, fights and arguments on relatively unimportant matters, lack of commutation, unfairness, less interest or more interest in sex. and Cognitive consequences may be in the form of overemphasis on self rather on task, more focus was on problems in retrieval/ recall from memory, negative aspects of life and work The factors such as the boss use the words were more focused rather than under what context he used those words. So it shows that responsiveness to the incidental data was reduced. Due to constant worry and anxiety the employees were unable to concentrate. The study reveals that stress management is important factor for an employee. The researcher is of opinion that employees put efforts to keep fit so that can reduce stress. There are various factors which acts as source and attributes for stress such as job satisfaction which directly related to stress and organization work culture. There is a significant correlation between job stress and climate of organization, higher stress straight forward impact on IT professionals' quality of work life.

Dr. Suraksha, Dr. Kuldeep S. Chhikara (2017) the researchers carried the study on Indian Banking Sector to identify the organization climates that influence the employees' perception regarding occupational stress. The study was completely based on A.K Srivastav and A.P.Singh stress index. It comprise of 11 factors which creates occupational stress such as Role Ambiguity Role Overload, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure , Role Conflict, Under participation, Responsibility for Persons, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relation, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status, Stringent Working Conditions. Total 600 respondents were considered from PNB, SBI, ICICI and HDFC banks from every level i.e. top, middle, and higher level, from various age groups, male and female, from different monthly income and expenditure groups and from different experience groups were considered as sample units. The questionnaire was used to collect data and the data was analyzed by adopting confirmatory factor analysis. The study reveals that all the 11 factors significantly influence the occupational stress among employees. The researcher suggested to higher authorities to reduce the work load, authorities and responsibilities must be systematically defined, implement principles of unity of command and direction at all the levels of organization which will help to avoid the ambiguity and role conflict. Researchers also recommend setting the goals for employees and rewarding good work, establishing open and clear communication system, to boost the employee's morale the higher authorities must ensure that necessary information and

human resource should be available at right time, so organizational goals can be attained.

Harshana PVS (2018). The author in this paper put efforts to define the term Stress and some work stress related models and identify them. How the stress affects an organization's overall effectiveness and its performance. It also observed that in some cases the stress also acts as morale booster for the employees. The author identified the facts from literature review that stress is the main reason for high employee turnover, reduced quantity and poor quality output, absenteeism, and corporate inefficiency, (Lambert, C, Ito, M 2004). The occupational stress also affected the employer and it become challenge for him, as it reduced the productivity of the organization and also it was the reason for lot of problems for employees. (Elovainio et al.2002). The managers fail to deal with employees because of the stress. By review of many research papers it is found that job stress has significant impact on employees' job performance. It automatically impact entire organization productivity. Researchers suggest the top management to take necessary steps to reduce the stress in order to increase job performance of employees.

Richa Burman and Dr.Tulsi Giri Goswami (2018), the researcher made an attempt conduct a literature review by adopting Reosekar and Pohekar's research methodology (2014). Overall 204 research papers were considered to carry the study. The papers were collected from year 1993-2017. The study reveals that work stress not only impact psychological and physical state

but also had a negative impact on social and family life of employees. The level of stress is not same among all employees as it depends on upon the sectors to which they belong. The researcher identified important aspects which act as stressors and also some strategies which help to cope up with the stress. Such as spending time with friends / family, and by relaxing the stress may be reduced. Constantly the organizational climate or work environment changes, it is the responsibility of the organization continually observe and study the health related issues along with work environments causes the stress .Overall the study provides the insight about conceptual knowledge of work stress, and also the causes and consequences in the work place. The study also suggests conducting regularly some workshops on stress management which will help to educate the employees about the causes and sources of stress and its negative impact on their health. Further this also helps them to reduce stress.

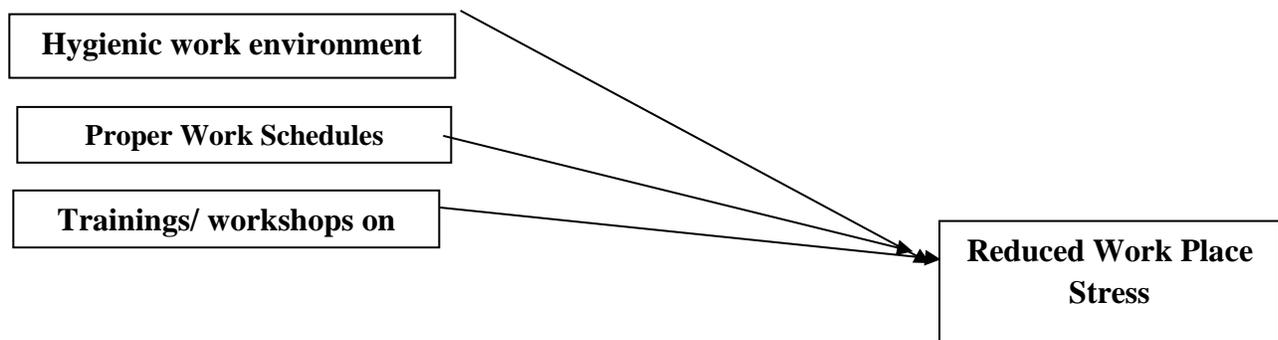
Sherry S. Chesak, Tejinder K. Khalsa, Anjali Bhagra, Sarah M. Jenkins, Brent A. Bauer, Amit Sood Stress (2019). In teaching profession burnout is the main reason for reduced quality of teaching and poor interaction between teachers and students, because of this the researcher made an attempt and carried the work to know the output of stress management and resiliency training program used for teachers working in public school. Total 55 public school teachers were considered for the study. The researchers found that by implementing SMART program the significant improvement was observed among school

teachers with respect to anxiety, stress, happiness, gratitude, quality of life and life satisfaction and improved interaction between teachers and colleagues and also among students and teachers. By this study it is clear that if organisation provides a proper training to its employees they can over come from the stress and improve their work efficiency. The SMART program was implemented to many sectors and the author made an attempt to implement to teaching staff and shown the positive results.

Stress is part of life and work. We can't expect a work without stress. The stress will motivate employees to perform well. So the minimum level of stress is required. The stress which motivates employees to perform well is called as eustress. The research carried by many researchers revealed that some time the excess or high stress results in negative results. So the study is undertaken to know the factors which cause stress, the impact of stress and how employees can reduce the stress at work place.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

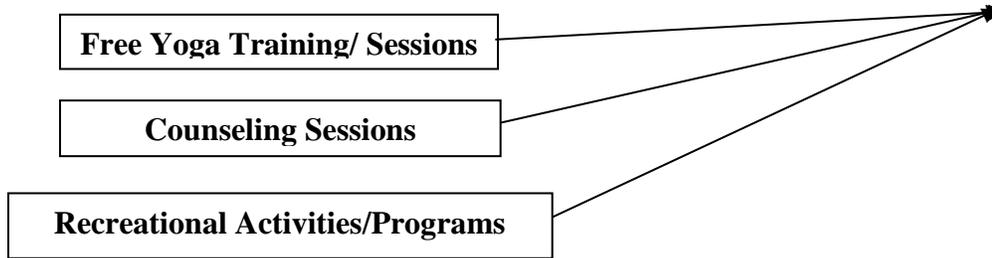
- To identify and understand the causes of stress among employees.
- To know the impact of stress on employees.
- To Suggest a Model for stress reduction in work place.



### 4. DISCUSSION

By the review of research papers, it is observed that workloads, working conditions, new technology, risk and danger, role ambiguity and conflict, relationships at work, and career development are the major factors create stress among employees. (Amat Taap Manshor (2003). Work stress not only impact psychological and physical state but also had a negative impact on social and family life of employees (2010). The organization should take necessary steps to reduce the stress. In this process it can make collaborative effort by involving unions and employees (John L.M.2006). Each individual must understand and identify the events cause the stress and frame his own ways to cope up with the stress (P.S. Swaminathan, & Rajkumar S (2013). Stress management and Resiliency Training (SMART) program plays significant role in reducing stress, anxiety, life satisfaction among the employees (Sherry S. Chesak2019).

On the basis of literature review, a model has been drawn, which can be used to reduce stress. Basically stress occurs because of unhealthy work environment, over work load, and lack of awareness among employees about stress. By looking into the above factors the model can be used to reduce the stress in work place.



**Figure: 1 Model for stress reduction in work place**

Hygienic work environment: The work environment one of the major factors causes the stress. The organization must provide good facilities to employees. This makes them comfortable and will be able to concentrate on their work. Lack of facilities also reason for poor performance. By designing good policies and effective implementation will make environment very hygiene. The lack of or poor work environment may cause stress among employees. Proper work schedules will help the organization to assign the works by considering work load of the employees. Most of the organizations prepare the schedules but they fail to implement properly. If the organizations successfully implement the schedules it will reduce the unnecessary work load on employees. The employees will complete the work without any tension. In the literature review it is observed that lack of awareness about stress among employees is the major problem. If the employees aware about the stress and its consequences, they may able to cope up with it. To achieve this employer should organize training programs/ workshops on stress management. The management can also can tie up with some organizations or can establish MOU's; these organizations may be invited to deliver some classes on stress and

conducting Yoga classes. This will be an effort towards making employees mentally strong. This will help the employees to manage stress. For some employees who need some special support for them one to one counseling session has to conducted with the help of experts. These sessions will help employees to understand the problems, which may cause stress and the awareness in this regard will help the employees to manage the stress. Some recreational activities like outings, some entertainment programs, sports activities, competitions should be organized. These will help the employees to come out of the routine work and these activities will give them some break from work. This will help them to reenergize themselves and come with fresh mind and complete the work.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Study helps to understand the concept of stress and factors causes the stress and its impact on employees and organizations efficiency and productivity. The stress is part of work but to certain extent it has positive impact but if it cross the level than it negatively impacts employees physically and psychologically. So it has to be addressed properly and timely. There are different ways to overcome from the stress. The role of

management is very important in reducing the stress. Without its support it is difficult to find a solution. The management should provide healthy work environment and also by conducting well designed training programme to help the employees to

## 6. FUTURE SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

Many studies were carried on stress management in banking, IT sectors, police department and also in academics. In Western countries studies were carried on Stress management among employees of Public road transport but Very few studies were carried in India, so there is a scope to

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understand the events causing stress and this will help them to overcome from the stress. Further a helping hand in the form counseling session will be more effective to reduce the stress among the employees.

carry a detailed study on stress management in public transport, SHG's NGO, Employees working in unorganized sectors. Further in the above sectors a research can be done to suggest some coping strategies. This will help the employees of these sectors to manage the stress. Further a research can be carried impact of COVID-19 on stress in different sectors. This will add value by making employees to overcome from stress and work with efficiency.

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