



## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: CAUSES AND MANAGING STRATEGIES

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**ABSTRACT**

Stress can be defined as a lively circumstance in which people face constraints, opportunities, or loss of something they desire and for which the consequence is both unpredictable as well as crucial. Stress is the response of people to the unreasonable/excessive pressure or demands placed on them. Job stress is a growing concern for organizations today. Occupational stress is stress related to one's job. It is often stems from unexpected responsibilities and pressures that do not align with a person's knowledge, skills, or expectations, inhibiting one's ability to cope. Occupational stress has negative effects for organizations and employers. Occupational stress is the cause of approximately 40% of turnover and 50% of workplace absences. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the causes and strategies to manage occupational stress.

**KEYWORDS :** Occupation, Stress, Causes, Strategies.**Introduction**

Occupational stress is one of the major health hazards of the modern workplace. It accounts for much of the physical illness, substance abuse, and family problems experienced by millions of blue and white-collar workers. Also, occupational stress and stressful working conditions have been linked to low productivity, absenteeism, and increased rates of accidents on and off the job.

Work is a central part of human life. It is the expression of the basic need to accomplish, to create, to feel satisfaction, and to feel meaningful. Rewarding work is an important and positive part of our lives. However, when work denies people an opportunity to utilize their creativity, intelligence, and decision-making ability, it causes stress.

Occupational or job stress may be defined as a "mechanism whereby the human body attempts to adapt to the environment." The body has a normal mechanism for dealing with stressful situations that is known as the "fight or flight" response. As soon as the brain senses danger, it sends messages (electrical, chemical, and hormonal) that stimulate the extra energy needed to fight the danger or run away from it. The stress cycle always includes the danger stimulus, the removal of the danger, and a state of relaxation.

**Causes of Occupational Stress**

It's important to recognise the common causes of stress at work so that you can take steps to reduce stress levels where possible.

Some common causes of stress include:

- Excessively high workloads, with unrealistic deadlines making people feel rushed, under pressure and overwhelmed.
- Insufficient workloads, making people feel that their skills are being underused.
- A lack of control over work activities.
- A lack of interpersonal support or poor working relationships leading to a sense of isolation.
- People being asked to do a job for which they have insufficient experience or training.
- Difficulty settling into a new promotion, both in terms of meeting the new role's requirements and adapting to possible changes in relationships with colleagues.
- Concerns about job security, lack of career opportunities, or level of pay.
- Bullying or harassment.
- A blame culture within your business where people are afraid to get things wrong or to admit to making mistakes.
- Weak or ineffective management which leaves employees

feeling they don't have a sense of direction. Or over-management, which can leave employees feeling undervalued and affect their self-esteem.

- Multiple reporting lines for employees, with each manager asking for their work to be prioritised.
- Failure to keep employees informed about significant changes to the business, causing them uncertainty about their future.
- A poor physical working environment, eg excessive heat, cold or noise, inadequate lighting, uncomfortable seating, malfunctioning equipment, etc.

**Strategies for Managing Occupational Stress**

The physiological, psychological and behavioural are important to the understanding of job stress and coping cannot be eliminated from daily life; Strategies in contemporary organization. Stress the only solution is to manage it effectively.

Organizational stress management is regarded as a new dimension of Human resource management. As stress affects all at some time, the HRM department should have its focus on measuring and taking steps to manage stress. Therefore, planning for strategies and implementing them is a big challenge for management. Based on the existing literature, the following are the key points an organization can take:

**1. Create Supportive Organizational System**

There should be decentralized and participative decision-making structure where upward communication is more. Clarify organizational policies to everyone and provide more job control and proper job description. The organizational culture should be such that, innovative thinking is encouraged even if it leads to failed ideas, this also helps in bringing down the stress experienced by the employees.

**2. Ergonomics and Environmental Design**

Need for improvement in equipment used and their good physical working conditions are in much demand in present tech-savvy world, and undoubtedly this will become one of the best stress coping strategies at organizational level. Therefore, organizations should provide all resources to get better output and avoid worker's frustration.

**3. Awareness About New Technology**

The use of the computer and other software technology has been inevitable and necessary. Therefore all the employees should be exposed to various computer tools, and the proper training should be held on continuous and regular bases.

#### 4. Stress Counselling

The employees can be provided with a counsellor for helping them to deal with work related and personal problems in order to understand and solve stress related problems to control mostly behavioral and emotional outcomes of employees.

#### 5. Educational and Training Programs

Plan and develop career paths and provide educational programs especially tailored to suit employees' job profiles. The employees can be given weekly sessions of Yoga and other such relaxing exercises so that they are able to deal with stress in a more constructive manner. Life style modification programs at individual and organizational level are recommended.

#### 6. Organizational get together and Fun

An informal get together would help in creating personal bonds between the various individuals belonging to the organization and this will definitely contribute towards better relations at the work place.

#### 7. Stress-audit

Conducting stress-audit at organizational level to understand what causes stress and its impact on themselves. This leads to design the best suitable strategies for managing the stress.

#### 8. Work Balance Initiatives

Companies have introduced a variety of strategies to help employees achieve work – life balance in India. They include flexible time options, Job sharing, work from home, use of telecommuting in fulfil the job, and child care support.

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