

## An Analytical Study of Occupational Stress in Education Sector

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### ABSTRACT

*Teaching has today become not only challenging but also highly competitive and a stressful occupation. Teachers are conscious of their conduct and adherence to human value. They are considered as a core stone of successful education system. In higher education, teachers are experiencing pressures to increase productivity and efficiency at their work places to meet out the expectations of general public, management as well as from state and central governments, which creates stress among them. It is important to tackle the causes of stress in the workplace as stress at work can lead to problems for the individual, working relationships and the overall environment. Managing stress in the workplace is therefore an essential part of both individual and it is institutional social responsibility also. The primary objective of present paper is to identify causes that lead to high stress. The secondary objectives are to study the consequences of stress and to suggest some workable interventions to reduce the stress. This research paper is of descriptive and analytical type and based on primary data collected through questionnaires filled by the 30 teachers working in engineering colleges in Kurukshetra. The secondary data includes reference books, journal, research papers and internet. The findings of the study indicates that most of teachers are*

*having moderate level of stress and work overload & job insecurity are the main causes of occupational stress. It also reveals that majority of respondents encounter tension and depression & problem in balancing work and family life due to stress and most of the teachers said that they managed work stress by taking rest and coffee & playing with their children. It is suggest that the management should come forward and promote various activities for reducing stress level of teachers.*

**Keywords:** Teachers; Stress; Engineering; Consequences; Interventions

### INTRODUCTION

Modern era is known as the “era of anxiety and stress” (Coleman, 1976). Stress has become a pervading feature of people’s life in modern world. The modern world which is said to be a world of achievements is also a world of stress. Stress is everywhere, whether it is in the family, business organization, enterprise, institute or any other social or economic activity. Right from birth till death, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. Thus, when this stress becomes excessive, employees develop various symptoms of stress that harm their performance and even threaten their ability to cope up with their environment. Despite tremendous advancements in science and technology, and remarkable growth of

economy and sources of luxury, people all over the world seem to experience stress in various spheres of their lives. Consistently psychosomatic and psychological disorders are increasing; the feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with life in general reflect the stress being experienced by people.

In the past also, the societies were not entirely free from stress. However the causes of stress in those societies were episodic in nature, low in severity and frequency. But during the last two decades the span of psychosocial stress has drastically increased. The basic reason was being the changed physical and socio-cultural environment of the contemporary societies and life style of the people. People's life has become more demanding, complicated, mechanical and dependent running by the clock. Ever increasing needs and aspirations, high competition, pressures of meeting deadlines, uncertainty of future and weak social support system have made the life of people stressful in modern societies.

### MEANING OF STRESS

The word stress is derived from the Latin word "stringere", stress was popularity used in the seventeenth century to mean hardship, strain, adversity or affliction. It was used in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to denote force, pressure, strain, or strong efforts with reference to an object or person. It has been defined by the oxford Dictionary as "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". Hans Selye first introduced the concept of stress in to the life science in 1936. According to Selye (1936), "The force, pressure, or strain exerted upon a material object or person which resist

these forces and attempt to maintain its original state."

Dr. Selye Hans suggested that stress had four basic variations: Eustress, Distress, Hyperstress, and Hypostress. **Eustress** is the positive, desirable stress that keeps life interesting and helps to motivate and inspire people. This involves successfully managing stress even if the individual is dealing with a negative stressor. It implies that a certain amount of stress is useful, beneficial and even good for health. There is increased energy, high motivation, shared perceptions and the performance improves quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Moderate doses of eustress help to improve an individual's performance. **Distress** refers to the negative effects of stress that drains an individual out of his energy and goes beyond his capacities to cope. This is a situation of "high stress" distress showing a drastic negative change in performance. The possibility of role overload may force the individual to commit errors, make him indecisive and cause irritation in him at the slightest pretext. **Hyperstress** means too much stress. It can lead to physical and emotional breakdown. Work overload can be a common source of over stress. **Hypostress** refers to too little stress leading to boredom, lethargy and frustration. Work under load and no work at all may lead to hypostress in some situations.

Dr. Selye Hans also suggested that stress can be acute and chronic in its effects. **Acute Stress** is the result of short term stressors. It is usually quite intense initially and then disappears quickly. It can be exciting and stimulating in small doses, but too much leads to fatigue. People, who experience this stress, tend to be over aroused, irritable,

anxious and tense. Its symptoms include tension, headaches, migraines, digestive disorders, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease. **Chronic stress** is a long term stress usually resulting from nagging problems. In case of chronic stress, a person's physical and mental resources are depleted. Chronic stress can lead to suicide, heart attack and violence. Long term chronic stress results in stress related disease and reduces the quality of life.

### **JOB STRESS**

Stress related to work environment is known as Work stress or job stress. Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirement of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. It is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affect an individual's performance and/or overall wellbeing of his body and mind. One or more of a host of physical and mental illnesses manifests job stress. Job stress leads to poor health and even injury. In some cases, job stress can be disabling. In chronic cases a psychiatric consultation is usually required to validate the reason and degree of work related stress.

**Steers (1981)** defined that, "Occupational stress has become an important for the study of organizational behaviour for several reasons-(1) Stress has harmful psychological and physiological effects on employees, (2) Stress is a major cause of employee turnover and absenteeism, (3) Stress experienced by one employee can affect the safety of other employees, 4. By controlling dysfunctional stress, individual in an organization can be managed more effectively. **Beehr and Newman (1978)** define occupational stress

as "A Condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning." **Cobb (1975)** has the opinion that, "The responsibility of load creates severe stress among workers and managers." **Brook (1973)** reported that qualitative changes in the job create adjustment problems among employees. The interpersonal relationships within the department and between the departments create qualitative difficulties within the organization to a great extent.

### **STRESS MANAGEMENT**

High level stress affects the individuals directly and through them, their families and organizations are also affected. Therefore efforts should be made to overcome the negative consequences of high stress. Stress management is required when an individual is unable to cope with the demanding environment. This inability generates anxiety and produces defensive behaviour so as to overcome the consequences of stress. Such actions may be taken at individual level as well as organizational level.

There is no "one size fits all" solution to manage stress. Every individual has a unique response to stress, so experiment with a variety of approaches to manage and reduce stress to learn what works best for you. Stress can be managed if we understand the reasons that cause stress and the level of stress. Stress can be effectively recognized and managed. The key is to understand the sign of stress, select a few appropriate techniques of stress management like, Effective Time Management, Positive Thinking, Yoga, Meditation etc.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

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In every study review of past studies is important to make the framework of present study. There is no dearth of studies conducted by various scholars in this area specifically related to this particular topic. The literature review presented henceforth helps in laying the foundation and in giving direction to the proposed research.

**Mehta (2012)** identified the various factors of organizational stress among the management teachers as affected by gender and experience. She also studied the correlation between organizational stress and conflict handling and also identified the conflict handling styles used predominantly by teachers to resolve dispute occur in the institute. Role stagnation was found the highest contribution to stress followed by role erosion. Competing style was found to be the most important style of conflict handling followed by the avoiding style among the management teachers of professional institute.

**Parilla (2012)** determined the level of stress experienced by Northwestern employees. It aims to establish the relationship of level of stress experienced with personal characteristics (age, gender, number of family members and income) and job position. It was found out that the middle level employees experienced the highest degree and level of stress compared to the other job positions. As to the relationship, personal characteristics are not correlated to job stress while job position is correlated with job stress. The research provided a stress management program for the employees of the University because it was determined that productivity and stress are negatively correlated. Stress should be

minimized and controlled to make employees more productive.

**Vijayadurai and Venkatesh (2012)** examined the various factors to stimulate stress level among women teachers in college of Tamilnadu. Survey method was employed to collect the data from respondents and the data were collected with the help of questionnaire. The study revealed that Workplace stress occurs when there are imbalanced demands and perceived pressures of the work environment and an individual ability to cope. It was found that 82 % of respondents always have heavy work load within the organization and there is no significant association between the qualification of the respondents and heavy workload. It also suggested that proper communication, good working environment should be provided for reducing stress.

**Jeyaraj (2013)** examined the Occupational Stress level of Government and Aided Higher Secondary School Teachers living in different socio-cultural and economic situations. The study found that Aided school teachers have more occupational stress levels than Government school teachers. Policy makers are advised to analyze the teacher training and assessment system with the assumption that personal and social characteristics and working conditions may have an effect on teacher occupational stress. Further, the results shown that teachers who reported greater stress were less satisfied with teaching, reported greater frequency of absences and a greater number of total days absent, were more likely to leave teaching (career intention), and less likely to take up a teaching career again (career commitment).

**Kakkar and Ahuja (2013)** explored the effect of stress among women lecturers in different colleges so that remedies could be found out to live a stress less life. The study was based on primary data which was collected with the help of a questionnaire for assessing the level of stress and making a comparison between the groups of women lecturers from Government and Private Colleges. It was found that there is no significant difference of stress levels among the women lecturers working in Govt. colleges and Pvt. Colleges. The study suggests that there is need for promoting relaxation programmes for the women lecturers to reduce stress.

**Reddy and Anuradha (2013)** examined the Occupational Stress of teachers working at higher secondary level. It was found that, about 88 percent of higher secondary teachers are experiencing moderate and high levels of occupational stress. To overcome occupational stress, the researchers have suggested some measures which could prove beneficial to teachers in coping with stress are: improve self esteem, build self confidence, work on building emotional intelligence competencies, develop a good sense of humour, practice yoga and meditation, exercise regularly, foster a supportive friend circle, cultivate hobbies, develop effective communication skills, and seek professional help, if necessary.

**Ahmad et al. (2011)** studied the work stress experienced by the teaching staff of university of Punjab in Pakistan. The study tended to examine the relationship between role conflict, role ambiguity and attitudinal outcomes of the job i.e. job satisfaction and organizational commitment of teaching staff in the largest and most populated university

of Pakistan i.e. University of the Punjab. The data were collected from 160 teachers teaching in five different faculties of the university by using personally administered questionnaires. The findings of the study suggested that there is a positive and significant relationship between role stress i.e. role conflict and role ambiguity and work stress however work stress is negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the teaching staff of the university. It was also suggested that higher the work stress experienced by the teachers, lower will be their satisfaction with the job and lower will be their commitment with the organization.

#### **NEED OF THE STUDY**

Teachers are conscious of their conduct and adherence to human value. The teacher plays an important role in shaping the behaviour of student especially in the beginning year. They are considered as a core stone of successful education system. Teacher stress may be defined as unpleasant feeling that teacher experience as a result of their work. In higher education, pressure is mounting from the general public, management as well as from state and central government, to increase productivity and efficiency. This pressure will likely intensify the sign of stress experience by teachers working in educational institution. The purpose of higher education is not static, rather it is adaptive and changes according to the systems of provision and the vision of institution. Teachers must adapt their skills suitably to the technological changes, otherwise they have to face stressful situation. Stress in the workplace is generally considered to result

when condition in the work environment are difficult for individual to manage. Thus they are facing work life balance issues and increase stress burden. Stress can lead to illness and absenteeism. High stress can cause teachers to leave the profession. So, there is need to study the stress level among the teachers working in engineering colleges.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To study various causes of stress that affects the teachers working in colleges.
- To examine the consequences of stress on the teachers working in colleges.

- To identify the various techniques adopted by individual for manage stress.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study has been limited to 30 college teachers of 3 engineering colleges in Kurukshetra.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The present study is of descriptive and analytical type and based on primary data collected through questionnaires filled by the teachers belonging to different age group having different gender. A random sample of 30 respondents is taken for the study. The secondary data includes reference books, journal, research papers and internet.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Table 1: Gender Wise Classification**

GENDER	NUMBER OF RECONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
MALE	12	40
FEMALE	18	60
TOTAL	30	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 2: Age Wise Classification**

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
20-25	6	20
26-30	16	53
31-35	8	26
TOTAL	30	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 3: Marital Status Wise Classification**

PARTICULARS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE	12	40
MARRIED	18	60
TOTAL	30	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 4: Experience Wise Classification**

PARTICULARS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
0-5 Years	18	60
6-10Years	12	40
TOTAL	30	100

Source: Primary data

**Table 5: Level Of Stress**

LEVEL OF STRESS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
LOW	9	30
MEDIUM	16	53
HIGH	5	17
TOTAL	30	100

Source: Primary data

From table 5, it is cleared that, majority of respondents face moderate level of stress. Among all the respondents, 53% respondents face moderate level of stress, 30% respondents face lower level of stress and 17% respondents face high level of stress.

**TABLE 6: CAUSES OF STRESS**

PARTICULARS	RANKS
WORK OVERLOAD	I
JOB INSECURITY	II
STUDENT MISBEHAVIOUR	IV
NO PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING	V
ADDITIONAL DUTIES	III
POOR INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP	VI

Source: Primary data

From table 6, it is inferred that the work overload (60%) and job insecurity (43%) are the major causes of stress. And also found that, additional duties (40%), student misbehavior (33%), and no participation in decision making (13%) and lastly the poor interrelationship (6%) are the secondary causes of occupational stress.

**Table 7: Consequences Of Stress**

PARTICULARS	RANKS
JOB DISSATISFACTION	III
POOR PERFORMANCE	IV
TENSION AND DEPRESSION	I
PROBLEM IN BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY	II
UNABLE TO SLEEP	V
LOWERED MORALE	VI

Source: Primary data

From table 7, it is cleared that the majority (60%) of respondents encounter tension and depression (60%) due to occupational stress. Among the total respondents, 53% respondents face the problem in balancing work and family life and 40% respondents feel job dissatisfaction due to stress.

**Table 8: Techniques Adopted By Individual For Manage Stress**

PARTICULARS	RANKS
READINGS BOOKS	V
MEDITATION	IV
REST AND COFFEE	I
TIME MANAGEMENT	III
PLAYING WITH CHILDREN	II
INTERACTION WITH FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES	VI

Source: Primary data

From table 8, it showed that among the total respondents, 60% respondents say that they manage stress by taking rest and coffee, 53% respondents play with children to manage stress and 46% respondents manage stress by time management, 33% respondents do meditation to cope with stress at individual level.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The main findings of the study are:

- Most of the respondents believed that they face moderate level of stress.
- Work overload and job insecurity are the main causes of stress,
- The main consequences of stress are tensions and depression, problem in balancing work and family life and job dissatisfaction among the teachers working in colleges.
- Rest and coffee, playing with children and interaction with friends and colleague are the main techniques which are used by individual for reducing the stress level.

**SUGGESTIONS**

- Work should be properly delegated to employees; it would help them in reducing stress arising from work overload.

- Organisations must introduce stress control workshops and seminars to reduce level of stress among employees.
- Additional research should be done. First, other areas negatively affected by stress should be studied to determine if stress affects other aspects of an individual’s life. In addition, other factors should be examined to learn what the personal and work related causes and symptoms of stress are for an individual.
- Organisation should improve employee’s control over the way they do their work.
- Employees should detect the problems as early as possible and should take corrective measures to prevent them from becoming serious.
- There should be proper communication system in the organization, which would reduce the stress causes due to ineffective communication.
- There should be healthy environment so that can be done in smooth way.

**CONCLUSION**

The problem of stress is inevitable and unavoidable in the service sector. Work



stress is a real challenge for college teachers and their employing institution. A majority of the employees face severe stress-related ailments and a lot of psychological problems. Since stress in education sector is mostly due to excess of work pressure and work life imbalance the organization should support and encourage taking up roles that help them to balance work and family. The productivity and job satisfaction of the work force are the most decisive factor as far as the success of an organization is concerned. Therefore, stress cannot be considered just as an individual issue because reduced job satisfaction and lower productivity has a direct effect on the institution as a whole.

In order to manage stress within the organization, it is recommended that the organization encourage employee development and embark on training interventions for employees. The more informed the employee, the less stress and the more productive the employee will become. Hence, the management must take several initiatives in helping their employees to overcome its disastrous effect.

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