

# THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON EMPLOYEES IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY: A REVIEW

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## ABSTRACT

*Impact of occupational stress on employees in textile industry has been recognized as an important area of concern for organizations. In recent times, Organizational life is quite stressful. The new technologies, global competition, and competitive pressures have multiplied the sufferings of Employees in Textile Industry. Employees who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated and less productive and less safe at work. Stress is the adverse reaction what people experience due to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them. The generally accepted definition today is one of the interactions between the situation and the individual. This article focuses the available literature to understand the phenomenon of stress so as to develop appropriate stress management strategies to not only save the employees from variety of health problems but also to improve their performance and the performance of the organization. This paper also attempts to provide a framework to examine the objectives of the existing review of occupational stress and coping strategies.*

**Key words:** Stress, Occupational Stress, Impact, Textile Employees.

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## INTRODUCTION

As the nature of work in the developed world undergoes more and more change and organisations downsize, de-layer and out source, the stresses and strains on employees increase. While a great deal of research Cooper [10] (2000) has been devoted to identifying the sources of workplace stress and its links to adverse health and organisational outcomes, little has been done to focus on interventions to improve working environments. In India, a rapid change is undergoing due to many contemporary trends in the form of industrialization, liberalization, modernization, automation etc. These changes have impacted the health of the employees and increased the work folds. There is no such occupation as a stress-free job. Everyone in his occupation exposed to tension, frustration and anxiety as he/she gets through the duties assigned to them.

Stress is often misunderstood and misinterpreted resulting into avoidable problems. In today's world, the concept of stress was first used by Hans Selye. Stress is the conception defined by endocrinologist Hans Selye [13] (1956) as the non – specific response of the body to any demand placed upon it, i.e., the 'wear and tear' upon an organism. He used the word "stress" which is an engineering term, to describe the responses to a force that when implemented in bodies, causes deformation. He further stated that stress is not necessarily something bad; it depends on how you take it.

Occupational stress is one of the major health hazards of the modern workplace. It can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses which occur when the demands of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers Sauter & Murphy [20] (1995). It occurs when there is an imbalance between the demands of the work place and a worker's ability to cope. It is also a significant and costly problem, and that the challenge for the organizations is to manage work stress in order to reduce health-care costs and improve productivity. On the organisational level, high levels of occupational stress have been

linked to high staff absenteeism and low levels of productivity. Stress decreases attention, concentration, and decision-making and also judgment skills.

Occupational stress has become one of the most serious issues in the modern world. Beehr & Newman [5] (1978) attributed the lack of progress in the area of stress research to the fact that stress seemed to be related to a large number of conditions that prevented a systematic focus. Majority of available research and theories about Occupational stress have been developed and empirically tested in western context. However the problem of Occupational stress and its consequences is more important for developing countries as these are undergoing enormous social and economical changes Jamal [14] (1999)

Occupational stress has become a challenge for the organizations as it results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and collection of other employee problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular problems Meneze [20] (2005). According to Seibt [22] stress is always present among employees however it can be reduced by improving the working conditions and quality of benefits in the companies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this article is to review the literature about the impact of Occupational Stress on Textile Employees and its effects. It will briefly review the impact of Occupational Stress and also the Stress management strategies to reduce their stress in their working area.

## SOURCES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress refers to the process through which employees perceive, appraise, and respond to adverse or challenging job demands at work Frese & Zapf [12] (1988). When the occupational stress occurs; it will directly affect the performance of worker and managers to the organization. Mostly, the occupational stress comes from the job that they are doing. Many people not aware of occupational stress that occur in the organization and they did not care about the occupational stress. They assume that the occupational stress will only affect their performance of work but also affect their health like heart attack, migraine that can lead to death. Sources of occupational stress were categorised by Cooper and Marshall [9] (1976) as follows:

- Intrinsic to the job will include physical aspects of the working environment, such as noise and lighting, and psychosocial aspects, such as workload, and will vary in importance depending on the job, e.g. health care professionals experience high workload, they need to work long hours and time pressures.
- Role in the organisation including role ambiguity and role conflict.
- Relationships at work including poor relationships with your boss or colleagues, an extreme component of which is bullying in the workplace.
- Career development including lack of job security and under/over promotion.
- Organisational structure and climate including little involvement in decision making and office politics.

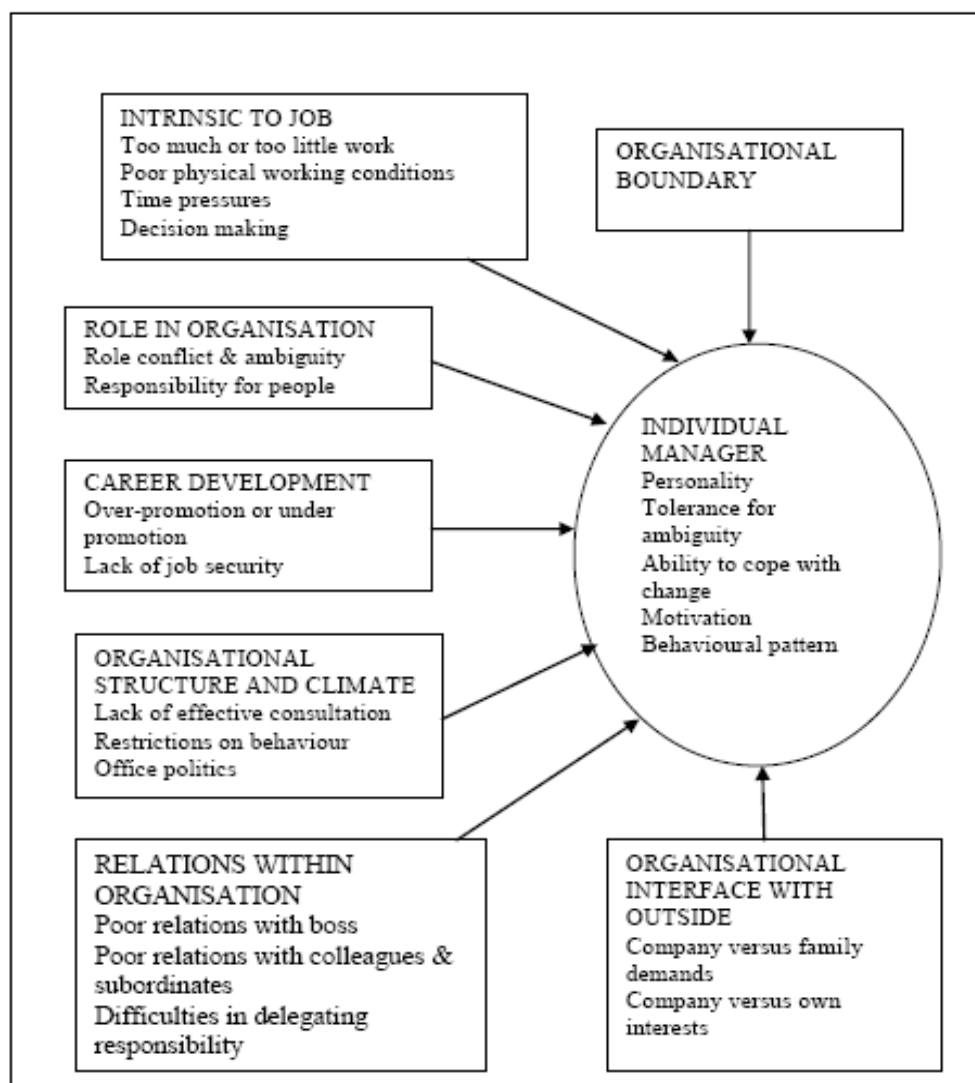


Figure 1.2: Sources of Managerial Stress Cooper & Marshall, [9] (1978, p. 88)

## EFFECTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

In many organizations, employees are expected to work long hours and undertake a range of projects and assignments in order to prove their worth to the organization. Furthermore, job and career reviews (appraisals) are intended to provide guidance to employees from senior management, to review current progress and to agree objectives, which are measurable and achievable, for future performance. Many job and career reviews, however, are badly conducted and can be stressful for employees. Frequently the stress arises from a feeling of unfairness, lack of understanding by their immediate manager and bitterness Jeremy Stranks, [16] (2005).

Examples of how stress can affect employees are included:

- Increased complaints from clients
- Employees losing commitment to the success of the organization
- Increased accidents
- Increased staff turnover
- Increased levels of absenteeism
- Reduced performance by the workforce
- A substantial increase in civil claims for stress-induced injury resulting in increased employers' liability insurance premiums.

Well-informed managers should recognize the signs of stress amongst employees at all levels. Failure to do this can have lasting adverse effects on the business, including low motivation, increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, faulty decision-making, poor industrial relations and reduced efficiency.

Christo and Pienaar [7] (2006) argued that the causes of occupational stress include perceived loss of job, and security, sitting for long periods of time or heavy lifting, lack of safety, complexity of repetitiveness and lack of autonomy in the job. In addition, occupational stress is caused by lack of resources and equipment; work schedules (such as working late shifts or overtime) and organizational climate are considered as contributors to employees stress.

## SOME OF THE REVIEW

“Books are carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature in dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill”. -Barbara W Tuchman.

1. Anis Ahmed [3] (2013) conducted a research on job stress towards an organizational change in textile industries of North India: pointed out that the blue collar employees of textile industries are having 35.78% very high acceptability reactions towards organizational change, 39.33% have moderate perceived acceptability, and 24.89% of employees shown their low but favourable acceptability to organizational change. This study also found that they have greater chance of upward mobility with respect to either designation or salary structure. This leads to organizational change.

2. Dr.T.S Devaraja [11] (2011), India is the world's 2nd largest producer of textiles and garments after China. It is the world's third largest producer of cotton after China and the USA and the second largest cotton consumer after China. The Indian textile industry is as diverse and complex as country itself and it combines with equal equanimity this immense diversity into a cohesive whole. The fundamental strength of this industry flows from its strong production base of wide range of fibres / yarns from natural fibers like cotton, jute, silk and wool to synthetic /man-made fibres like polyester, viscose, nylon and acrylic. The growth pattern of the Indian textile industry in the last decade has been considerably more than the previous decades, primarily on account of liberalization of trade and economic policies initiated by the Government in the 1990s. The relative ease of setting up clothing companies, coupled with the prevalence of developed-country protectionism in this sector, has led to an unparalleled diversity of garment exporters in the third world. Apparel is an ideal industry for examining the dynamics of buyer-driven value chains.

3. Chandra [6] (1998) in his paper accentuated on production capabilities and efficiencies and recognized them as the most crucial factors to struggle global competition. His paper also highlighted various strategic decisions that Indian exporters of textile & clothing must take in order to survive in the competitive market in post quota regime.

4. K. Narayanaswamy, Dr.jelsy Joseph [17] (May 2013) they pointed out that the elimination of quota system under agreement on textile& clothing, it was anticipated that global textiles and clothing base will be shifted to Asia. Moreover it was perceived that India along with China is going to be major gainer of quota removal in textile & clothing trade. The paper attempts to study the global textile & clothing trade pattern and export performance of Indian textile & clothing industry vis-à-vis its competitors. While Indian share in US has increased but the growth rate is low compare to other suppliers. It is to be noted that Exports from high cost Asian suppliers to the US have grown at more modest rates or declined. The empirical finding suggests that Indian export of textiles & clothing was not able to compete with China & United States. China ranked at first place as its market share is 47.77% in total textile imports by US, followed by India at second place with a market share of 11.83%, way behind China. It has also been noticed that Indian exports of textiles & clothing is highly correlated with global trade pattern in contrast to China, Bangladesh etc.

5. Farooq A. Shah [1] (Jan, 2003) in this study he analysed role stress in the Indian banking industry. The study results indicate that the officers suffer more than their clerical counterparts on account of inadequate authority and rapid administrative, regulatory and conceptual changes. The findings also indicate that while the stress experience in the banking industry differs with the position of employees in the organisational hierarchy, the nature and essence of stress prevailing in the industry is more or less the same.

6. Ajay Kumar Dhamija, Mandeep Singh Rekhi, Raghav Raj Buddhiraja, Kunal Kapur [4] (Oct 2006): this study shows the problem of stress assessment in an organization, using a well known standardized questionnaire OSI-Revised was distributed to a sample of 45 employees of the company named Binbow Auto India (P) Ltd. The sample consisted of five levels of employees. The prepared data was exported into SPSS 12.0 for statistical

analysis. It was concluded that an average normal maladaptive levels of stress is existing in this company except the dimensions of role overload and responsibility. ANOVA was carried out to find the differences across the three groups such as executive officers, employees and labourers. From this significant difference was found in Role Overload and Physical Environment and in all the other scales of all dimensions are having no significant difference was found between the groups. The employees reported that the high level of responsibilities for the activities and work performance of subordinates. Then no personal strain was reported at any level. This shows the work environment given to them is very good. Finally a few coping mechanisms were suggested to build on the existing capabilities.

7. Khalid Afshan [2] in his research titled —Role of Supportive Leadership as a Moderator between Job Stress and Job Performance (2012), have found that, there is a direct relationship between stress and job performance in any organization. To improve the performance of an individual in an organization an employee should receive good support from their leaders. Therefore, a supportive leader can improve the performance of an employee even at unfavourable situations.

8. Conley, S., & Woosley, S. A. [8] (2000) found that role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload among teachers are related to individually and organizationally affects the education sector. They also suggests that organizational commitment and intention to leave are affected by role stress which suggests that the reduction of role stress may not only benefit individuals but also benefit the education sector by increasing the bond between teacher and organization.

9. Jasmani binti Mohd Yunus, Abdul Jumaat bin Mahajar [15] (Dec, 2011) The purpose of this study is to present the findings on the occupational stress among administrative and diplomatic (PTD) officers. A total of 329 officers were completed the questionnaires. The result shows that occupational stress has a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being. Osipow occupational stress inventory is used. From the multiple regression analysis on all the six dimensions of occupational stress only four dimensions were significant which have p-value < 0.05, namely role overload, role ambiguity, role boundary, and role insufficiency.

10. Kumar [18] (2011) observed that India's share of the global textile industry is expected to grow from 4% to 7% by 2011-12 and the share of apparel in the export basket is expected to increase from 48% to 60%. A Vision 2010 for textiles formulated by the government after exhaustive interaction with the industry and Export Promotion Councils to capitalize on the positive atmosphere aims to increase India's share in world's textile trade from the current 4% to 8% by 2010 and to achieve export value of US \$ 50 billion in 2010.

## OVERVIEW OF STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND COPING STRATEGIES

Conducting stress management programs at organizational level, with the objective of creating awareness about stress and making employees to learn stress management techniques. Some of them are as follows:

- Career development programs - providing career development appraisal, including the use of self assessment tools and psychological testing, providing assistance in job search, and training in skills such as producing a curriculum vitae and interviewing.
- Reduction of Workloads - Reduction in distressful workloads is important in managing overload. Delegation and work sharing can reduce chronic overload. Skills in working more efficiently and effectively can be developed through in-house training, procedure manuals, courses and coaching.
- Skills Training - The term “skills training options” refers to the fact that the stress management activity is in the provision of training as such. After training, individuals or work groups are required to put their new skills into practice by using them to deal with potentially stressful situations.
- Assertiveness Training - Assertiveness training helps us to deal with such demands without becoming angry or upset. When we are assertive, we are able to negotiate or say “No” to unreasonable demands without becoming aggressive or non-assertive. Assertiveness training also teaches us to be able to speak up and be taken seriously without damaging the rights of other people. Thus, it is a useful stress management programs.
- Time Management - Time management tends to be perceived as a stress management technique mainly for managers, white collar and administrative staff. It is concerned with developing a personal sense of time, thinking about the future and setting goals; analyzing where, how and why you are spending your time; finding a proper balance between working life and leisure time; and achieving life goals by gaining control of time. Thus, the goal of time management is, “Work smarter not harder” Mackenzie, [19] (1972).

- Relaxation Training - Relaxation techniques vary greatly and include meditation; progressive, deep muscle relaxation techniques; or a brief period of mental and physical relaxation while sitting comfortably in a chair at work or at home. This technique helps one to recover quickly from accumulated psychological and physical fatigue. In time, the individual develops a capacity not only to cope with, but also to resist the stress. The techniques are easily learned and have a positive psychological and physical effect on the body when practiced regularly.
- Employee Assistance Programs - This technique counsels the individuals with work-related problems, relationship difficulties, illness worries, redundancy or retirement concerns, substance abuse, or financial worries and so on.
- Meditation - Meditation is a group of mental training techniques by which one attempts to get the reflexive, "thinking" mind into a deeper state of relaxation or awareness. One can use meditation to improve not only mental health and capacities but also the physical health. Meditation techniques have physiological effects on the brain which combat the 'flight or fight' stress response.

## CONCLUSION

In recent times, Organizational life is quite stressful. The new technologies, global competition and competitive pressures have multiplied the sufferings of Employees in Textile Industry. Employees who are stressed are likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, and less productive and less safe at work are victimized to stress. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful to cope up the stress. Thinking in a broader perspective of life will definitely reduce the stress. There are many ways to manage the stress, such as meditation, Yoga etc. The organization should identify the stress attitude among their employees and should analyse the sources of stress. After the analysis, organization should adopt the proper coping techniques to get their employees away from the occupational stress. Proper coping strategies will reduce the stress among the employees and help to improve the skill of the employees so as to improve the organization.

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