OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS – STUDY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN MUMBAI AREA ”

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ABSTRACT
Stress is mandatory according to modern school of thought but excessive targets and lack of motivational practices degenerates the engagement level of employee with in the organization which causes less job satisfaction and leads to less organizational commitment. HRM policies play a major role in handling stress and healthy environment in organization and show that stress has a inverse relationship with psychological fitness which contribute to the total productivity and employability. This is paper is based on trend analysis of corporate stress and its relation with the psychological fitness of employees working in Information Technology Industry in Mumbai Region.

Keywords: Engagement level, Psychological fitness, stressor, stress agent .

INTRODUCTION
Human resource management being a specific subdivision of social sciences is an invigorating field of knowledge. It covers the humanitarian aspects of the workplace and helps in ensuring better working condition of the people involved in generating socially productive services for the society at large. Its impact helps the society to develop empathy and the culture of treating human beings as the most prized asset, for nation building activities. By the advent of liberalization, privatization, globalization India faces an economic reform and become the global attraction centre for various national and multinational companies. The service sector in India has seen a huge growth and still possesses immense potential to be tapped. This development process is not untouched with the cut throat competition culture in the market. In order to maximize the market share, the companies generally fix a target level and reaching the target level becomes the root cause of survival. In order to give the best and making it before the competitors the workplace has now been
observed to be occupied with the stress level. Every stress level is determined by the position of the employee in the organization and his legitimate powers to transfer the part of stress level to his subordinates and staff members. The human resource management practices helps in throwing light on this contemporary subject. IT industry is one of the growing sector of the day, the demand of IT professionals of India in the world is increased to such an extent that they get an handsome amount of packages with hectic, stressed full job targets, willingness to earn more in short span of time leads youth and expose to different health related issues and convert into psychological, psychosomatic and physiological disorders. The IT industry has been one of India's most rapidly growing areas of new employment, but opportunities have also emerged in other service industries including fast food, fashion, advertising and design, courier services, hairdressing and cosmetics, to name some. "The boom in the Indian software industry has put the country on the global IT map. It has revolutionized the Indian economy, creating considerable employment opportunities, generating wealth and significant foreign exchange, and driving massive social changes. Software-drive IT is today at the top of India's national agenda. It is an instrument and a model for the modernization of the Indian economy'. The optimism of this Australian report, echoes that of other surveys by NASSCOM\(^1\) and McKinsey. According to the last two, India's IT revolution has placed India onto "the threshold of its second tryst with destiny" .NASSCOM is the National Association of Software and Service Companies. (IT Software and Services Industry in India: Strategic Review 2000, NASSCOM, New Delhi, 2000 and the study they commissioned by McKinsey in 1999.)

### Causes of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra organisational stressor</th>
<th>Organisational stressor</th>
<th>Group stressor</th>
<th>Individual Stressor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Societal changes</td>
<td>Competitive pressures</td>
<td>Lack of group cohesiveness</td>
<td>Frustration</td>
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<td>Technological changes</td>
<td>Role ambiguity</td>
<td>Lack of social support</td>
<td>Goal ambiguity</td>
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<td>Family</td>
<td>Centralization</td>
<td>conflicts</td>
<td>Personal control</td>
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<td>Relocation</td>
<td>Tight control</td>
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<td>Economical and</td>
<td>Crowded work area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial condition</td>
<td>Race and class</td>
<td>Life changes</td>
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<td>Unsafe work</td>
<td>Unsafe</td>
<td>Poor lightening</td>
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<td>conditions</td>
<td>conditions</td>
<td>Polluted air</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No opportunity for development</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

1) Eugene J. Kutcher, Jennifer D. Bragger, Ofelia Rodriguez-Srednicki, Jamie L. Masco, (2010) in their article. “The Role of Religiosity in Stress, Job Attitudes, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior”. Published in Journal of Business Ethics conclude that their study replicate the findings about the role of religious beliefs and practices in shaping an employee’s reactions to stress/burnout and job attitudes. Second, we extend the literature on faith in the workplace by investigating possible relationships between religious beliefs and practices and citizenship behaviors at work. Third, we attempted to study how one’s perceived freedom to express his/her religious identity at work was related to workplace attitudes and behaviors. Mixed results suggest that religiosity can be related to stress and burnout, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior.

2) Marcus Selart, Svein Tvedt Johansen in their research (2011) article “Ethical Decision Making in Organizations: The Role of Leadership Stress”, published in Journal of Business Ethics said analyzed that, stressful situations affect both leadership ethical acting and leaders’ recognition of ethical dilemmas, Stressful situations were observed to have a greater impact on ethical acting than on the recognition of ethical dilemmas. This was particularly true for situations involving punishment and lack of rewards. The results are important for the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of an organization, especially with regard to the analysis of the stressors influencing managerial work and its implications for ethical behavior.

3) James b. Avey, Fred Luthans, and Susan M. Jensen in September–October (2009), in their research article “Psychological capital: A positive resource for combating employee stress and turnover”, published in Human Resource Management, Published online in Wiley InterScience, express the fact that Workplace stress is a growing concern for human resource managers and psychological capital (the positive resources of efficacy, hope, optimism,
resilience) may be key to better understanding the variation in perceived symptoms of stress, as well as intentions to quit and job search behaviors. The article concludes with practical strategies aimed at leveraging and developing employees’ psychological capital to help them better cope with workplace stress.


5) Le Fevre, Mark - mark.lefevre@aut.ac.nz Kolt, Gregory S. Matheny, Jonathan (2006) in their research paper “Eustress, distress and their interpretation in primary and secondary occupational stress management interventions: which way first?” published in, Journal of Managerial Psychology; Vol. 21 Issue 6, present a paper, To develop an argument for the retention of secondary approaches to stress management (those that focus on the individual within the organization) as first interventions, prior to the employment of primary approaches (those that focus on the organization's processes and structures). This is based on a reconsideration of eustress versus distress and a review of current empirical evidence on the effectiveness of stress management interventions. There is little empirical evidence on which to base recommendations for organization-based stress management interventions as first or sole approaches and therefore the value of these as first or sole approaches is questioned. Instead secondary, individual-focused, approaches are recommended as first-line interventions prior to the adoption of organization-based interventions. Practical implications - In practice secondary stress management approaches are currently most common. Broader primary approaches appear to have excellent theoretical support and a growing body of supportive literature and accompanying recommendations for employment.
6) Roger Rowland’s (Jun 2008) in his research article, “Stress agenda”, published in the “Occupational Health -60, 6; ABI/INFORM”, suggest that, sexes do not have the same trigger for workplace stress and suggests that employers should approach them differently. Concluded that women relish change but cannot get on each other while men do not care about each other but struggle to cope with change, based on study over 900 respondents, seems to support psychological theories based on studying behavior and hormone release in the gender, which suggest that stressed men are likely to become aggressive, while women resort to gossip and bitching.

7) Caroline Biron1, Hans Ivers1, Jean-Pierre Brun1, and Cary I. Cooper, Lancaster University, Quebec, Canada, and Lancaster University, Lancaster, UK, (December 2006) in his research article “Risk assessment of occupational stress: Extensions of the Clarke and Cooper approach”. published in Health, Risk and Society; 8(4): and concluded that for an organization to prevent occupational stress problems, it is necessary to correctly diagnose the characteristics of the work and employment conditions that are perceived as risks by employees and to investigate the consequences of these risks. Clarke and Cooper propose a methodology to assess which organizational factors pose the highest levels of risk to the well-being of employees. A level of risk is calculated based on the exposure level of a hazard and on the level of negative consequences associated with this exposure. The methodology has proven to be useful to prioritize and target specific areas for interventions.

8) Christo F V Fernandes*, Satish Kumar** and Nandakumar Mekoth (2008) presented research article on “Length of Service and Role Stress”, published in ICFAI university press and study revealed significant differences in stress experience among short, medium, and long tenure groups. For the total and for the six types of role stress, long tenure groups experienced the minimum stress, medium tenure group experienced a medium level stress, and short tenure group experienced the maximum stress, pointing to the existence of a negative relationship between length of service and role stress.

The performance of employees is determined by the level of stress encountered and their capability to manage stress. Stress creates an inorganic growth in organization structure and effects the functioning and overall productivity of the organization. In the above backdrop the objective.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**
1. To undertake a brief analysis of the environmental condition of corporate stress level
2. To Examine the Human resource management practices and methods of employees’ motivational factor to overcome with the stress load by different IT companies.
3. To study the level of psychological fitness of the employees working in IT sector in Mumbai and find out the relation between the occupational stress and attrition rate.

**METHODOLOGY**

Research Method of study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Data Collection in study is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through general discussion and unstructured interviews with company officials and employees of the company of same level. The secondary data will be collected from the published reports, and departmental records of various organizations. The libraries of the organizations and the websites will also be consulted. Convenience sampling is conducted for the study and having a sample size of 200 employees is drawn from Information technology companies in Mumbai region such as Wipro, IBM, Hexaware, and Learningmate. A face-to-face unstructured interview is conducted enquiring about stress and its effect on psychological fitness. The questions probed into definitions, prevalence, causes and antecedents, and impact of stress on productivity. The schedule with questions is posted on social networking as well to elicit responses. The present papers relevant facts and figure which conform to the level of stress with in the IT professional and creates unbalance between mental fitness.

**LIMITATIONS**

1. The present paper presents only a few companies official level of stress. The prescriptions have not been attempted. No statistical techniques are used to analyze the data.
2. Most respondents were aware of both stress in work environment but could not able to explain/define it concretely. They are unable to justify the root causes whether it’s from organization or from individual stressor.
3. The findings recorded are mere assumptions/perceptions of the respondents about Relation between corporate stress and psychological fitness.
4. Some respondents clearly stated that organization target oriented job, uncooperativeness and role ambiguity leads to stress in organization.

**ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION**
Corporate Stress and its relation with psychological fitness

Dimensions, which are severely negatively affected are given below:

1. Stress and attrition
2. Stress and leadership
3. Stress and health
4. Stress and demographic factor (age, experience, gender.)
5. Stress and job description

Stress and corporate culture in the field of heart ailments, recently conducted a medical camp for over 2,000 staff of a reputed information technology (IT) company. What it found was that more than 80% of the employees showed symptoms of heart ailments like coronary artery disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. Dr Ravindra Kulkarni, president of Just For Hearts and a cardiologist attached to Deendayal Memorial Hospital, has warned about the rising incidence of heart disease among the youth, especially those in the IT sector. According to him, symptoms of heart diseases are more prevalent in people working in the IT and BPO sectors. “The average age at which a person may suffer a heart attack has come down from 40 years to less than 30 years. The symptoms are more prevalent in people working in the IT and BPO industry,” he said. Kulkarni told DNA that the recent survey by the World Health Organization (WHO) showed that the chance of youth suffering from heart ailments has increased from 8% to 15%. Hectic and stressful work schedules and a sedentary lifestyle of the people in the IT and BPO sectors are the main reasons for prevalence of cardiac problems among the youth. “Patients tend to hide facts about their lifestyle habits such as smoking, which misleads the doctors. This is a critical factor in their treatment,” he said. Dr Jagadish Hiremath, a cardiologist from Poona Hospital, also felt that the increase in incidence of heart diseases among people is attributed to diabetes, high blood pressure and overall stress. “Youths should take life easy and relax, rather than trying to earn more. Unless they do that the number of cardiac problems is bound to increase in the days to come,” Hiremath told DNA. Cardiologists are of the opinion that a pro-active approach to heart and lifestyle management can do wonders to one’s health. “Regular exercise and proper diet are the keys to a healthy heart. Smoking hampers the process altogether,” said Hiremath.

LEVELS OF STRESS
SPIRITUAL  – identity, perception, values, self awareness
MENTAL  – thinking, discriminating, deciding, acting
EMOTIONAL  - feelings, emotions, intuition
PHYSICAL  – disease, illness, fatigue, food.

Stress included in Health and Safety in Employment Amendment Act 2002, declared as a ‘hazard’ (sec. 8). And WHO announce occupational stress to be worldwide epidemic, 20% of payroll of companies goes toward dealing with stress-related problems (Riga, 2006). Research analyzed that Source of stress are heavy work load, uncertain job expectations and long hours (American Psychology Association-2007). But the achievement of Psychological capital is necessary for effective functioning of employees (Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman 2007, Avolio-2007). Model for stress and psychological fitness balance researcher gives a EOHR scaling methods in which for measuring stress levels - WES - work environment scale (WES moos 1981, 1986) is used and include 10-pointer scale, major dimension are:

(i) E-efficiency - build confidence
(ii) O- optimism - positive attribution
(iii) H-hope - persevering goal to succeed
(iv) R-resilience – bouncing back.

Major Causes burnout/occupational stress with in employees are: Increased accidents , Low trade union present , Poor working conditions , Occupational demand-constant monitoring , unstructured tasks, repeat exchange of information i.e. meetings, conferences, unpleasant conditions, new technology, Competitive demand role juggling between family and job, Role ambiguity and role conflict, Overloads and Under loads, Lack of social support, Lack of participation, Staff turnover, Increased accidents, Addiction (alcohol, drugs, smoking, internet, work - sheet manipulation). Stress full situation leads to lack of psychological/mental fitness of employee. Fitness related to psychological/physical condition of workers. Which affects behavioral, mental and psychological dimensions of employees? Psychological defines difference between fitness’ and ‘readiness’ for duty. (Marie-Claude Rigaud work: 2002 vol.16 issue.) “Fitness has a relationship with leadership” examine by Mc Dowell-larsen, Sharon L. Kearney, in the Leigh-Journal of
management psychology:2002.vol 17 issue. In Gallup research shows that exercise, sleep, fitness help to reduce stress. Which also help to regulate the mental fitness of worker.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO DEGREE OF STRESS WITH IN THE ORGANISATION

- ATTRITION
- TURNOVER
- GENDER DIFFERENCES
- LESS EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT
- LESS INCENTIVE SCHEMES
- SCARCE RESOURCES
- CENTRALISED DECISION MAKING
- UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF AUTHORITY

![INCREASE STRESS](image1.png)

![DECREASE STRESS](image2.png)

- POSITIVE MORALE OF EMPLOYEES
- OPTIMUM UTILISATION OF RESOURCE
- QUALITY PRODUCTION
- VALUE ADDITION
- PRODUCTIVITY
- EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- LESS NEED FOR POWER
- FAIR and EQUAL RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION
- STRUCTURED PROCESS
- DECENTRALISATION
“Mumbai and Pune being a hub for IT, BPO and education, the effect can be seen in the city as well,”, Mumbai is next heaven for IT professionals after Bangalore because of Long, unlimited opportunity for jobs, being an international city, cosmopolitan atmosphere, presence of most of industry, easy accessibility to work area, flexible timings. but every opportunity have some challenges in it, that are-Long working hours, massive traffic problems, high attrition rate, target based job, 24x7 desk support, bring up high stress/burnout level in the employees which disturb their psychological fitness.

**MAJOR STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES**

**INDIVIDUAL STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES:** Exercises, Relaxation, Behavioral self-control

**ORGANISATIONAL STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES:** Networking, Counseling, Stress management seminars, Fitness centers by company, Job sharing, Yoga classes, Flexible timing.

**DIFFERENT STRESS REDUCTION TECHNIQUES USED BY IT COMPANIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>IBM</th>
<th>HEXAWARE</th>
<th>LEARNINGMATE</th>
<th>WIRO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>safe and healthful workplace for our employees</td>
<td>Further skill enhancement provided by company</td>
<td>Cooperative environment for employees</td>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) TIMINGS</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) MEDICAL FACILITIES</td>
<td>Medical Facilities Provided</td>
<td>Medical Facilities Provided</td>
<td>Medical claims</td>
<td>General Health and Wellness Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) NATURAL TECHNIQUES</td>
<td>Yoga and meditation training</td>
<td>Yoga training</td>
<td>Yoga training</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Numerous stress management seminars and programmes</td>
<td>Stress management sessions</td>
<td>Stress management and relaxation module</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) CELEBRATIONS</td>
<td>Emotional well being programs</td>
<td>After any project or assignment completion, a small party is organized by the group members which is financed</td>
<td>a) Office birthday is celebrated, b) Celebrating birthdays of subordinates at the end of each month</td>
<td>Fun and learn exercises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### 7) TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

- Job sharing
- Further skill enhancement provided by companies
- Prize distribution

### 8) OTHER SERVICES

- **a)** Food Services - Proper facility and maintains health and hygiene standard
- a) If employees are working on Saturdays, they can be set off against any other weekday
- a) Free entertainment allowance for employees who are working for more than 3 years
- b) Receive recommended clinical preventive services
- b) If an employee is working after working hours...
- b) Indoor and outdoor games organized by the company
- c) Adopt physically active lifestyles
- c) Company provides them with the travelling and food allowance
- d) Achieve and maintain healthy weight
- d) Sports activity
- e) Establish and maintain good nutrition
- e) Social activity - planting trees, helping children in orphanage.
- f) Become and stay smoke-free
- e) Picnics at a quarter intervals
- f) Further skill enhancement provided by companies
- g) Nature trips

### CONCLUSION
This Study reveals that occupational stress affects the mental fitness of employee working in IT sector and creates hazard for organizational and employee productivity. Environmental condition both internal and external creates a pressure for work which establish negative inference with in worker as in the form of dislike the work, avoid the deadlines, anxiety, frustration, unfair projection of actual work techniques, health related disorders. HRM policies and practices provide a great help to reduce these stress with help of different motivational techniques used in selected IT companies are flexible timings, meditation, overall development of employees, medical facilities, social activities, team building exercises, travelling allowances, recreation exercises, sports, games etc. By the introduction of these techniques employees develop personal bonds with the organization, which generates organizational commitment by the means of employee engagement and job satisfaction. Sometime, application of these stress reduction techniques not hold employees with the organization in long run and employees continuously switch off form the organization in frequent basis shows trend of IT sector employees and increases the attrition rate which majorly caused by both individual stressor and organizational stressor.

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Psychological capital: A positive resource for combating employee stress and turnover James b. Avey, Fred luthans, and Susan m. Jensen


Stress-Related Workers' Compensation Claims anonymous small Business Reports; Nov 1987; 12, 11; ABI/INFORM Complete.