

# Stress Management among Indian IT Employees

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## ABSTRACT

IT careers are often characterized by hard work, long hours and tight deadlines. Coupled with these high stressed careers, personality traits like high ambition, a strong sense of time urgency, hostility, distrust and anger could play havoc on the physical and psychological well-being of the professionals. Managing stress by mobilizing and enhancing internal coping strategies and learning and employing appropriate methods of responding to stressful situations are assumed solutions to the ever increasing demands of IT field. Current study focuses to extract out the reason for stress in Indian IT industry and understand various factors like Individual perception about stress is mostly based on number of factors such as family background, educational qualification personality value system age, number of dependence etc. Researcher has also attempted to analyze the reason and relationships of these factors. The study is a rewarding exercise in the sense that, in addition to identifying the factors, which influence the stress, it also brought out the problems encountered by the respondents from various angle.

**Keywords:** Stress, IT, Employee.

## INTRODUCTION

Stress is a reaction to a stimulus that disturbs our physical or mental equilibrium. While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with your productivity and impact your physical and emotional health. The study of stress is of significance both for the individuals and the organizations because of its damaging effects. The distress resulting from

mismanaged stress may be marked by behavioral, psychological and problems for the individual. The health consequences of stress can be numerous. We all get stressed at some point of time in daily basis. Sometimes it has some positive effects and other time it may be harmful. If you are not stressed, then your satisfaction level is good, on the other hand too much of stress can result in loss of efficiency, failure to

perform well and affects the mental and physical health. Menon (2012) from his study of 60 samples found 80% suffered from stress. BEECH H.R. BURNS L.E. (1984) has noted four basic approaches to stress measurement. They are self-report, performance based measurement, psycho-physiological and Biochemical measurements. Jakulla (2012) studied the shop floor workers experiencing more job stress and lower mental health. But these two groups did not differ in their coping behavior. The executives are better with work home balance. DHANAM (1976) has reported the results of his investigation of Bank employees stress, based on an analysis of data which included the reports of 658 Employees in private and Govt. bank in the U.K. He stated that the two major conclusive of his survey were that, more employees were experiencing stress and severe stress is being experienced by more employees. DOUNHAM.J (1978) identified two main types of common stress responses among employees. The first according to him is frustration, and associated with headaches, stomach upsets, sleep disturbances, hyper tension and body rashes, and in prolonged cases depressive

illness. The second is anxiety, and is associated with feelings of inadequacy, loss of confidence, confusion in thinking and occasionally panic.

So we need to balance the level of stress in our life. In the changing and challenging times that we all feel that there is a need of an efficient stress management system. This is applicable to Indian IT too. With advent of India a favorite outsourcing destination, India has evolved in the HR process and conflicting work pressures. Information technology in India is an industry consisting of two major components: IT services and business process outsourcing (BPO). The sector has increased its contribution to India's GDP from 1.2% in 1998 to 7.5% in 2012. Employees are facing lot of problems in their family, social, physiological, official problems etc. There had been several studies for stress and ways to overcome the same. However no single study focuses on stress analysis from the perspective of Indian organization.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This deals with description of methodology and the steps undertaken for collection and organization of data and

presenting the findings of investigation. The methodology of research indicates the general pattern of organizing the procedure for gathering valid and reliable data for the purpose of investigation (Kothori 1996). The methodology of the study includes the description of research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, development and description of tool, data collection procedure and method of analysis. Research design refers to the researchers over plan for obtaining answers to the research questions and the strategies that the researchers adapt to develops information that as adequate, accurate, objective and interpretable. Research design is a blue print study that maximizes control over factors that could interfere with the study desired outcome

### **Definition of stress**

"Stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics an / or psychological process, that is consequence of any external action situation, or event that place special physical and or psychological demands upon a person" - **Ivanecih and Atteson**

"Job stress is 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" by **Beer and Newman**

### **Causes of stress:**

There may be numerous conditions in which people may feel stress. Conditions that tend to cause stress are called stróssors. The various stressors can be identified as

### **Individual stressors**

There are many stressors at the usual level of individual which may be generated in the content of organizational life or his personal life they are Life and career changes, Personality type, role characteristics etc.

### **Factors influencing job stress**

The factors influencing job stress are as followed Factors in work relate and stress, Quantitative overload, Qualitative over load, Work under load, Role conflict, Working condition, Relationship at work, Relationship with superiors, Relationship with co-workers, Career development, Job security etc.

### **Organisational stressors**

The major organizational stresses are Organizational policies and Organization

structure. They provide formal relationship among individuals in an organization. Any defect in organization structure like lack of opportunity of participation lack of opportunity for advancement,. high degree of specialization, excessive interdependence of various departments, line and staff conflicts etc work as stressors as relationship among individuals and groups do not work effectively.

### **Environmental Factors**

Just as environmental uncertainty influences the design of an organization's structure, it also influence stress levels among employees in that organization. Changes in the business cycle create economic uncertainties. When the economy is contracting, for example, people become increasingly anxious about their job security. Political uncertainties don't tend to create stress among north Americans as they do for employees in countries like Haiti or Venezuela. The obvious reason is that the United states and Canada have stable political systems, in which change is typically implemented in an orderly manner.

### **Stress and heart disease**

The linkage between stress and heart disease is well established. If stress is intense and its hormones are not 'used up' by physical activity, our raised heart rate and high blood pressure put tension on arteries and cause damage to them. As the body heals this damage, the artery walls scar and thicken, which can reduce the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart. This is where a fight-or-flight response can become lethal: Stress hormones accelerate the heart to increase the blood supply to muscles; however, blood vessels in the heart may have become so narrow that not enough blood reaches the heart to meet these demands. If yoU experience this and you are lucky, you will in turn experience chest pains, will stop doing what you are doing and immediately seek medical help. If you are not lucky, you will suffer a fatal heart attack.

### **Stress management**

The A-B-C strategy is often used by psychologists for effective stress management. The beauty of this strategy is that it can be used by the layman as a form of self-help tool for making the necessary modifications in his life.

### **A for awareness**

Be aware of the various factors internal or external which increase your stress levels. When you are feeling under pressure next time, make a note of what caused it and how you could have coped with this situation better. Talk to your trusted colleagues or friends and get their perception of you as a person.

### **B for balance**

All stress, as we have already discussed, is not bad. Without stress, we would be uncompetitive and lose out in the real world. This is what spurs us to achieve and progress and gives us milestones to measure our success and worth. Still, a balance has to be achieved between the positive and the negative stresses. It is okay to take on additional responsibility during times of need such as financial or family pressures in spite of the stress which you suffer, but if this is prolonged and taking a toll of your mind or your body, it is better to reduce things or do them in moderation. Learning to say "no" is important.

### **C for coping and control over your life**

This is where you learn to make those

changes in your environment or yourself to cope better and combat the negative stressors. These include stress management techniques and include changing or modifying your thinking, your behaviour and your lifestyle.

Other than these there are many more ways are known for stress management as reframing or emotionally-oriented approach, Power of positive thinking, action-oriented, diversion and distraction, diet control, Regular exercise, sleep properly etc.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

In this an attempt has been made to study the level of stress of the respondents in accordance with personal factors, family factor, official factors and various measures. In addition to this, the factors highly influence towards stress were also studied with the help of ranking method.

### **AGE AND LEVEL OF STRESS REGARDING THE FAMILY FACTORS**

The distributions of sample respondents according to age and family factors with level of stress are shown in the following table 1. It could be noted from the table that stress among the young respondents was

ranged between 5 and 13 with an average of 9.94. The middle-aged respondents were ranged between 3 and 15 with an average of 10.14. On the other hand, the old aged respondents were ranged between 7 and 13 with an average of 10.27. Thus, it is inferred from the above analysis that old respondents have more stress regarding the family factors at the maximum level. With a view to find the degree of association between ages of the respondents and level of stress, a two-way table was prepared and the results are shown in the following table.2. The percentage of medium level of stress was the highest (72.7) for the old age group. The percentage of low level of stress was the highest (37.2) for the middle age group. In order to find the relationship between the age of the respondents and the level of stress, a chi-square test was used and result of the test is shown in the following table.3. It is noted from the above table that the  $p$  value is greater than 0.05 and hence the result is not significant. Hence the hypothesis 'age of the respondents and the level of stress are not associated' hold good. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the ages of the respondents.

## **GENDER AND LEVEL OF STRESS REGARDING THE FAMILY FACTORS.**

The level of stress according to the gender of the respondents was studied under two heads, such as male and female. The sample consists of 76 male and 24 female users. The distribution of sample respondents according to the gender and are shown in the following table 4. It is identified from the above table that the stress among the male respondents was ranged between 5 and 15 with an average of 10.24 whereas female respondent's level of stress was ranged between 3 and 13 with an average of 9.67. Thus, the table reveals that the maximum stress was among the male respondents in the study area.

With a view to find the degree of association between sex of the respondents and the level of stress, a two-way table was prepared and the results are shown in the following table 5. It is found from the above table that the percentage of medium level of stress was the highest (66.7) among the male respondents and the lowest (65.8) among the female respondents. The percentage of low level of stress was the highest (34.2) among the

female respondents and the same was the lowest (33.3) among the male respondents. In order to find the relationship between the sex of the respondents and the level of stress a chi-square test was used and result of the test is shown in the following table.6.

It is noted from the above table that the 'p; value is greater than 0.05 and hence the result is not significant at 5% level. Hence the hypothesis' sex of the respondents and the level of stress are not associated' was hold good. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the sex of the respondents and the level of stress.

### INFLUENCING FACTORS TOWARDS THE STRESS

The factors that will influence the respondents towards the stress were classified in five factors. They are "Family factors", "Social factors", "Psychological factors", "personal factors" and "official factors". Weighted Average method was employed to study the ranks offered by the respondents. Refer table 6. It could be noted from the above table that among the five factors "family" was ranked first. It is followed by the "psychological". "Official" was ranked third and the factor "personal" was ranked fourth and finally "social factor".

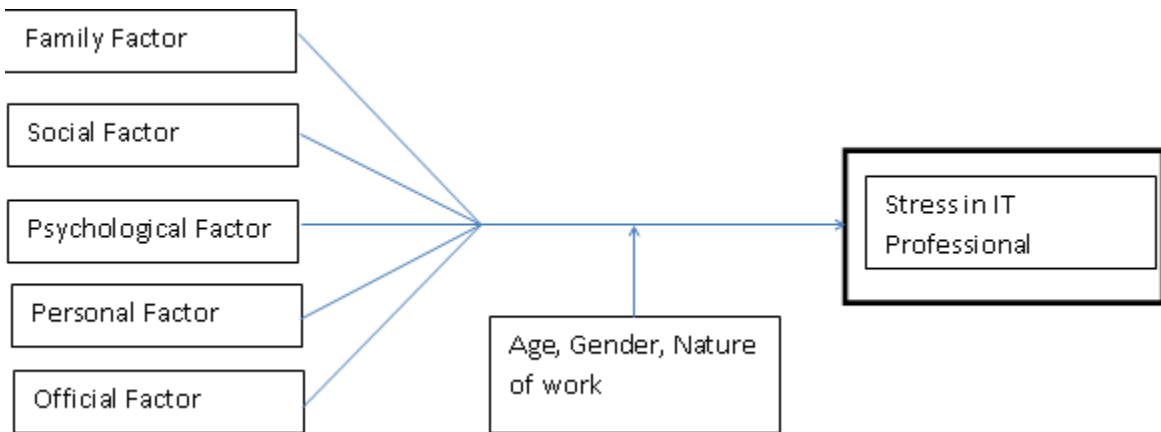


Figure.1 : Theoretical Framework

**Table: 1 Age and family factors**

AGE	No. of Respondent	%	Average	Range		SD
				Min	Max	
Young (<31)	35	35	9.94	5	13	2.10
Middle(31-45 )	43	43	10.14	3	15	2.77
Old (>40)	22	22	10.27	7	13	1.91
<b>Total</b>	100	100	10.10	3	15	2.36

**Table 2 Age level of stress**

	Level of Stress		Total
	Low	Medium	
<b>Young</b>	12	23	35
<b>%</b>	34.3%	65.7%	100%
<b>Middle</b>	16	27	43
<b>%</b>	37.2%	62.8%	100%
<b>Old</b>	6	16	22
<b>%</b>	27.3%	72.7%	100%
<b>Total</b>	34%	66%	100%
	34.0%	66.0%	100%

**Table 3 Relationship between the age of the respondents and the level of stress**

Factor	Calculate Chi-Sq value	Degree of freedom	'P' Value	Remarks
Age	0.642	2	0.725	Non-significant

**Table 4 Gender and Level of stress**

Sex	No of respondent	%	Average	Range		SD
				Min	Max	
Male	76	76	10.24	5	15	2.17
Female	24	24	9.67	3	13	2.87
<b>Total</b>	100	100	10.10	3	15	2.34



**Table 5 Gender and Level of stress**

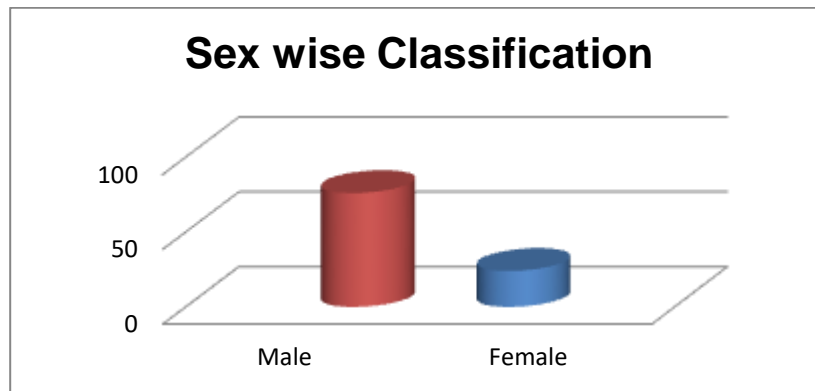
		Level of stress		Total
		Low	Medium	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	8	16	24
	<b>%</b>	33.3%	66.7%	100%
	<b>Female</b>	26	50	76
	<b>%</b>	34.2%	65.8%	100%
<b>Total</b>		34	66	100
		34%	66%	100%

**Table 6 Relationship between the sex of the respondents and the level of stress**

Factor	Calculate Chi-Sq value	Degree of freedom	'P' Value	Remarks
Age	0.006	1	0.937	Non-significant

**Table: 7 Influencing factors towards the stress**

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	Weighted total	Weighted average
<b>Family</b>	30	26	18	14	12	252	2.52
<b>Social</b>	8	12	18	30	32	366	3.66
<b>Psychological</b>	16	24	26	28	6	284	2.84
<b>Personal</b>	20	20	18	24	18	300	3.00
<b>Official</b>	28	18	20	4	32	298	2.98



**Fig. 2 Sex wise classification**

### **FINDINGS RELATING TO THE STRESS DUE TO OVER ALL PROBLEMS**

It is inferred from the analysis that middle and old aged respondents have more stress regarding the overall factors at the maximum level. The study reveals that the stress was more or less equal among the gender in the study area. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the education of the respondents and level of stress. But it is found from the analysis that PG respondents have stress at the maximum level. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the income of the respondents and level of stress. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the nature of the Work and level of stress. Thus, it is inferred from the above analysis that the respondents working in both IT companies have equal stress. It is found that there is close relationship between the experience of the respondents and level of stress. It is inferred from the analysis that the respondents have experience of 5 — 10 have stress at the maximum level.

### **FINDINGS RELATING TO THE STRESS DUE TO FAMILY PROBLEMS**

It is found from the above analysis that old respondents have more stress regarding the family factors at the maximum level. The percentage of medium level of stress was the highest for the old age group. The study reveals that the maximum stress was among the male respondents in the study area. It is inferred from the analysis that PG with profession respondents has stress at the maximum level. It is found from the analysis that all the income groups have more or less equal stress regarding family factors. It is inferred from the analysis that the respondents working in IT have stress due to family problems at the maximum level. From the analysis it is concluded that there is close relationship between the nature of the Work of the respondents and level of stress. It is inferred from the analysis that the respondents having 5 - 10 years of experience have stress at the maximum level. It is inferred from the analysis that clerks were having stress at the maximum level.

### **FINDINGS RELATING TO THE STRESS DUE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS**

It is concluded that there is close relationship between the ages of the respondents; it is found that middle aged respondents have more stress regarding the psychological factors at the maximum level. It is concluded that there is no close relationship between the sex of the respondents and the level of stress. It is concluded that there is no close relationship between the education of the respondents and level of stress. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the income of the respondents and level of stress. From the analysis it is concluded that there is no close relationship between the experience of the respondents and level of stress. It is found from the analysis that scale-2 were having stress at the maximum level.

#### **FINDINGS RELATING TO THE STRESS DUE TO PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL PROBLEMS**

It is found from the above analysis that there is no association between the level of stress and the personal profile factors like age, sex qualification, income, experience and nature of work with respect to the personal and official problems. It is found

from the above analysis that there is association between the level of stress and the personal profile factors designation with respect to the personal problems.

#### **FINDINGS RELATING TO THE HIGHLY INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR OVER ALL STRESS**

It could be noted from the analysis that among the five factors "family problems" was ranked first. It is followed by the "psychological". "Official" was ranked third and the factor "personal" was ranked fourth and finally "social factor".

#### **SUGESSTION**

Stress Management in IT refers to one of three forms of stress Management practice: a) Employee Assistance Programmes b) Stress Management Training and c) Stress reduction. Employee Assistance Programmes generally refer to the provision of employee counseling service by an organization. Stress Management training programmes designed to provide employees with better coping skills for example through meditation, bio-feed back, muscle relaxation and stress inoculation. The third type of practice stress reduction refers to those organizational interventions, which are

aimed at lowering the level of stressors experienced by the employees. Work redesign, job enrichment, employee welfare facilities, job relocation etc. are some of the measures included in this category.

## CONCLUSION

The study is a rewarding exercise in the sense that, in addition to identifying the factors, which influence the stress, it also brought out the problems encountered by the respondents from various angle. This has enabled the researcher to give certain practical solutions to the problems encountered by the respondents in IT Organizations.

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