

## **“A study on identifying Occupational Stress and their determinants and remedies in Pharmaceutical Industry.”**

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*Abstract: In Pharmaceutical companies the scene of stress is all the more worse as they don't have raw material availability locally and these units are subject to stiff government regulations and are unable to meet international drug standards and badly hit by dumping of drugs from various countries, thus this industry faces heavy financial losses and other challenges and resultantly go for trimming the workforce, layoff and no promotions and sometimes cuts employees' salaries and the new joiners get meager salary and instead they are asked to work for long hours and need to do multiple tasks and as a result severe stress develops in them and conflicts take place between the coworkers and between boss and employees. So all these become causes to intense stress especially in pharmaceutical industry so this industry was chosen for the study. And due to stress many health problems start popping up like depression, anxiety and these further develops many severe health problems like high blood pressure, cancer, diabetics, stomach ache and thus employees are unable to perform up to the mark. The present study was a table research for which extensive review of literature was done.*

*Key Words: Occupational stress, health hazards, Pharma Industry, age, gender, marital status, MBO*

### **Introduction**

Stress is defined in terms of how it impacts physical and psychological health; it includes mental, physical, and emotional strain. Stress occurs when a demand exceeds an individual's coping ability and disrupts his or her psychological equilibrium. Stress occurs in the workplace when an employee perceives a situation to be too arduous to handle, and therefore it becomes menacing to his or her well-being. Occupational stress is very popular in the professional life, the pressure of achieving target this is what an employee experiences due to the over work and responsibilities, or

because of other pressures of the workplace. Stress at the workplace is inevitable and inescapable, So it can occur in an extensive range of work environment, one of the reasons could be employee lack the desired skill sets and thus overwork demands do not match with either attitude or skill set and as a result he or she is unable to complete the work in time. The modern working world is clamorous and pressing so after a limit it becomes unacceptable to an employee and it becomes worse when he or she loses backing from the boss or the supervisor, and thus pressure gets built up and take a shape of a heap. But at the same time all the pressures are not bad, to a limit they motivate too and make employees work harder. The p

### **Occupational stress**

Occupational stress can be defined as the physical and emotional response/s that occur when Sales Professional perceive an imbalance between their work demands and their capability and/or resources to meet these demands or In simple words it is the harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there is conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands. In general, occupational stress arises from the working conditions/environment of a system. Researchers on stress make it clear that, to enter in to the complex area of stress, especially in to the area of occupational stress, is very difficult. Steers (1981) indicate that, "Occupational stress has become an important topic for study of organizational behavior for several reasons." The major causes could be: Performance expectations are super high, thus it does not match with the skillset of employees.

### **The Pharma Industry**

The Pharmaceutical Industry develops, produces, and markets drugs licensed for use as medications. For this they have a well equipped R&D department. Pharmaceutical companies are allowed to deal in generic and/or brand medications and medical devices. They are subject to a variety of laws and regulations of the government regarding the patenting, testing, pricing and ensuring safety and efficacy and marketing of drugs. The Indian Pharmaceutical industry is the second-largest in the world by volume and is leading the manufacturing sector of India. India is the largest provider of generic drugs globally.

The Indian pharmaceuticals market has two unique characteristics first, branded generics products dominate, making up for 70 to 80 per cent of the retail market. second, local players

have enjoyed a dominant position driven by development in new formulation capabilities and early investments. Third, intense competition due to low price levels. Globally India ranks tenth in terms of value, it is ranked third in volume. These characteristics of Pharmaceutical sector present their own opportunities and challenges in the global market. It is estimated in the report that from a market size of 12.6 billion in 2009, the Indian pharmaceutical market will grow to 55 billion by 2020.

When one talk about pharmaceutical companies the scene of stress is all the more worse as they don't have raw material availability locally and these units are subject to stiff government regulations and are unable to meet international drug standards and badly hit by dumping of drugs from various countries,thus this industry faces heavy financial losses and other challenges and resultantly go for trimming the workforce,layoff and no promotions and sometimes cuts employees' salaries and the new joiners get meager salary and instead they are asked to work for long hours need to do multiple tasks and as a result severe stress develops in them and conflicts take place between the coworkers and between boss and employees. So all these become causes to intense stress especially in pharmaceutical industry so this industry was chosen for the study. And due to stress many health problems start popping up like depression, anxiety and these further develops many severe health problems like high blood pressure, cancer, diabetics, stomach ache and thus employees are unable to perform up to the mark.

**Murphy(1995)** grouped the causes of work stress in to five categories: 1. Practices of the Organization, 2. Features of the job, 3. Culture in the Organization, 4. People skills 5. Personality Traits. Where as Lu et al., 2003 classified what triggers job stress into six types: Development of Career, worklife balance, Physical climate, Social relations, Job characteristics and Structure of the Organization. Also Copper et al. 2003 classified stress trigeres in to six categories: Intrinsic factors of the job, role of the management, Social skills, development in the career, Organization Structure and climate and atmosphere at home. While Antoniou et al. 2006 emphasized upon above factors differently, he grouped them only in to two variables 1. Exogeneous and other 2. in Endogeneous.

Stress is more likely in some situations than others and in some individuals than others. For instance colleagues do not support each other and or also does not get backing and encouragement

from the boss or the supervisor and sometime they become tyrant even and give termination threats,or cuts pay. Sometimes stern workplace policies make employees stressed.In fact occupational stress is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job because of a poor fitbetween someone s abilities and his/her work requirements and conditions. Stress can undermine the achievement of goals, both for Sales professionals and for organizations. If key staff and large number of workers are affected, work stress may challenge the health and performance of their organization. Unhealthy organizations do not get the best from their workers and this may affect not only their performance in the increasingly competitive market but eventually even their survival ( Michie, 2006). When affected by work stress people may:

- Become increasingly distressed and irritable.
- Become unable to relax or concentrate.
- Have difficulty thinking logically and making decision.
- Enjoy their work less and feel less committed.
- Feel tired, depressed, and anxious.
- Have difficulty in sleeping.
- May suffer from such as heart disease, increases in blood pressure, headaches, cancer, diabetics, stomach ache

**Hazards to Organization due to stress are:**

- 1) Increasing absenteeism.
- 2) Poor decision making
- Lack of creativity
- 2) Decreasing commitment to work.
- 3) Increasing staff turn-over.
- 4) Increasing complaints from clients and customers.
- Team dynamics erode
- 5) Increasing unsafe working practice.
- 6) Adversely affect staff recruitment.
- 7) Damage the organization image

## Objectives of the study

To study the concept of Occupational Stress

To study the determinants of Occupational Stress among employees of ...

To study their impact of stress on Organization and individual

To suggest the remedy for stress reduction

## Review of literature

**Muthukumar(2020)**.through their study on work induced stress and its impact on job satisfaction and performance of pharmaceutical company representatives of south kerala region found that the Medical representatives were under pressure and they were facing work induced stress because of uncertainty and unclear and changing job roles. Further he concluded more research is necessary to delve deeper into the various reasons for work induced stress and the solutions which could be applied to ameliorate work induced stress in Medical representatives.

**Vasan(2018)**. tried to identify the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction among the pharmaceutical sales representatives.The sample size of their study was 200 pharmaceutical sales representatives. From his study he concluded that the majority of the pharmaceutical sales representatives were having high level of job stress and due to that they had job dissatisfaction.And under this study,identified roles and responsibilities, job nature, work relationships lack of career development, and organizational structure and climate as prime factors of stress. And when he applied correlation between job stress and job satisfaction,he found negative relationship between the two as job stress will increase definitely satisfaction with the job will decrease and he concluded that this dissatisfaction was negatively influencing the organizational performance.

**Madeeha Malik et al.( 2017)** did a study in two cities of Pakistan to identify stress among pharmacists, for this a descriptive cross-sectional study design was used, for this study they took a sample of 382 practicing pharmacist working in different conditions. Their study showed a

significant difference in stress level of pharmacist working in different sectors ( $p=0.003$ ), field of practice ( $p=0.001$ ), age group ( $p=0.002$ ), marital status ( $p=0.001$ ) and salary structure ( $p=0.001$ ). The findings of their study was that almost all of the pharmacists practicing in twin cities were moderately stressed in spite of the difference in the gender, age and sector of practice. But more stress was found in married employees as they were at the initial stage of their career and thus had more anxiety, wanted a quick ladder for growth. Less salary, low work experience, inadequate support system and training were the major causes of stress as pharmacists were not able to handle the demands of the job.

**Deekonda Sathish Kumar and N Radhakrishna (2017)** studied the relation between stress, performance, and pressure at work environment of Medical Representatives in the Karimnagar city, Telangana and the impact of demographic factors on them. From the study they found that the medical representatives of Karimnagar district were not able to manage the Stress and pressure at work place and as a result were not able to achieve their work goals.

**Priya Kalyanasundaram (2017)** study examined the impact of Stress among medical representatives in Coimbatore. The survey was conducted among 60 Medical Representatives which represented the entire Population. Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastav and Singh (1981) was used to measure the Occupational Stress of the respondents. Higher amount of stress was found in the Male respondents than Females due to intrinsic impoverishment as they did not find their jobs challenging and appealing. Also that married respondents scored high on poor peer relations as they were more committed to their family and hence required to devote more time to the personal life, a significant difference between these Stress constructs and Type of the Firm was observed, medical representatives of Indian companies had more stress compared to Multinational Companies. It must have been due to high sales targets or pressure from the managers to perform and they also found that many companies did not conduct any Stress related training program or counselling for Medical Representatives.

**Soo and Ali(2017)** in their study tried to find relationship between stressed employees and organization citizenship behaviour , organizations today constantly expect the employees to engage in organizational citizenship behavior as it is helps organizations to sustain long-term

profitability. So he did a study on 474 bank officers they took this study because no such study was done earlier and identified a significant relationship between stressed employees and organization citizenship behaviour.

Singh et al.(2016) study revealed that Occupational stress or job if stressor becomes hazard and it was found to be a multivariate phenomenon. Their study reported that emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reactions to adverse work conditions give rise to stress.

**According to Angadiet al. (2013)** study where they tried to explore the impact of Occupational stress on pharmaceutical employees in Bangalore Industries Karnataka with a sample of 250 women pharmaceutical professionals. , in their research study they took variables like work load, company culture lack of proper job training and observed their effect on productivity in the organization. Their findings were that pharmaceutical employees experienced moderate level of stress and stress dimension. Their study revealed that 85 percent of the respondents experienced medium level of stress and stress dimension also suggested the Work culture and workload significantly affected the dependent variable i.e. overall stress and as a result depression was observed in women employees. Also when they applied correlation they found that there was strong positive correlation between company culture and overall stress.

**Patil SB, Meena JS(2013)** in their study found there was too much work pressure among medical representatives and that created health problems, that approx sixty six percent of medical representatives were under pressure & stress and in sixty percent the cause was they were not satisfied with their job profile and sixty three percent said they were not comfortable with the working hours , seventy three percent in their study reported that consistently they were pressurized for enhancing their performance and seventy eight percent were not able to make a balance between work & home.

According to **Marwat and Khan (2010)** reported that the employees working in the pharmaceutical industries of Hayat Abad industrial estate, Peshawar, prevalence of stress among them was due to exposure to lethal chemicals and they were not given adequate protective dressing and other items. There was substantial amount of work induced stress among medical representatives were found. The work stress was more in females working in pharmaceutical

industries than male and employees who were in age category of 25-30 were more prone to stress as compared to 20-25 age category. But the study of K. Chandraiah et al., 2003 and when they researched departmentwise it was found that employees of marketing and production department were more likely to get stressed compared to other departments. Also excess workload, physical conditions compared to social support and work conflict in the pharma industry of Hayat Abad industrial estate, Peshawar. If one look at gender perspective another study (Fotinos Ventouratos et al., 2005 & Irma Wright et al., 1994) also supported these findings that female managers had more stress compared to male managers as females have more mental pressure, as they have domestic responsibilities too and she is subconsciously apprehensive of negative gender stereotype and because of that they are paid less.

**Colligan, Thomas W., Colligan MSW., and Higgins M. (2006).** claimed that stress create physical as well as mental hazards and as a result employee is not able to give productivity and organization suffers. Further their study found various factors like excess workload, isolation, lack of power, long working hours, virulent work environments, unhealthy relationships among coworkers and with management, haryying by boss, bullying management, and inadequate opportunities for career growth and lack of motivation for upskilling caused stress in employees.

When the demands and pressures placed on individual workers do not match the resources which are available, either from the organization or within the individual, stress can occur and endanger that person's health and well-being". (Employment Relations and Union Services: Health and Safety- Workplace Stress, 2004). Occupational stress is any discomfort which is felt and perceived at a personal level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed a person's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately (**Malta, 2004**).

Selye Hans, (1956), said all the stress are not bad, he coined a term called Eustress and it depends on how employees take and manage it, when people get motivated to do work in time because of time pressure works get completed in time and after that employees feel relaxed Eustress, is positively correlated with life satisfaction and well-being and, it motivates to learn new skills while stress that occur due to organizational politics, humiliation at work is pernicious and



excess job demands become detrimental which creates health hazards is called distress and this always have negative implications and give adverse effects on the individual as well as on the organization.

## **What Organization needs to do**

The workplace is a communication and interaction based industry. These relationships have either developed or are developing and can be problematic or positive. From the above review of literature Common stressors found include harassment, organizational culture, structure of the organization, discrimination, biased boss, gossip and rumor, and other disparaging remarks, the communication, management style, and participation among groups of employees as important variables which causes stress. So it is especially suggested that employees should be involved, there should be collaborative planning like MBO, management by objective where employees KRAs are set along with their consent, there should be participative culture, and responsibilities should be equally dispersed so these will have a positive effect on stress reduction, improved work performance and job satisfaction. job conditions will generate stress or not depends on certain extent on Contriving or getting along skills. Differences in individual characteristics, such as personality and coping skills are very significant predictors so organizations must train employees how to cope with stress be it because of organizational politics or because of task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands, and physical demands.

Employee wellness is associated with productivity at work, so organizations should create an environment that promotes employee well-being at all times. The best is to initiate by letting the employees feel comfortable by having an open conversation with the boss, leader or HR professional. It's good for them to have a place where they can clarify what's expected of them, ask for any necessary resources or support from other colleagues or enriching their job by getting included in more meaningful tasks and all these are possible by introducing MBO. Management by objective is such a approach which enhances the performance of organization as employees are involved while setting their goals and KRAs and thus they become more committed to their responsibilities in the organization, subordinates also let their bosses know which resources they need and which targets they can accomplish in time. There is one to one discussion with the subordinates, and frequent formal evaluation meetings takes place where superiors and subordinates

discuss progress towards achievement of goals. Thus subordinates are involved at every step which makes them indispensable.

Employees should be given break, the regular breaks will let them have fresh air and will allow them to refresh from negative thoughts and stress and thus they will return to job with a fresh mindset as for sometime they will not remain engaged in occupational activities and they should be given a switch off from checking email from home in the evening, or answering the phone calls from home ,this will establish cool in the mind of the employees.Managers should find what helps employees relax as per their organization and they should make it sure to do it regularly.They should introduce an employee assistance program (EAP), Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, regular exercise and mindfulness can be introduced through this platformwhich will help in evaporating away occupation-related stress and through EAP they should also change unhealthy behaviour if it is there and help employees to better manage the work stress.

Positive motivating and thriving,exciting,challenging,caring culture should be built by encouraging employees to take on different responsibilities and making their roles very clear to them and during MBO pushing employees to stretch their goals and providing in-office games and by hosting themed office parties on common holidays,sometimes happy hours should be hosted by catering lunch on birthdays of employees,one-to-one meeting should be hold by managers for discussing employees career further,and also new comers should be given welcoming onboarding experience and culture coach should be assigned to them.Employees should be given training from time to time about stress awareness and how to overcome it.

## **Conclusion**

The literature review projectedthatStress in the modern pharma world is inescapable and inevitable and too much is bad and detrimental for employee as well as for employer so it needs to be reduced.One should also try to identify which situations create the major stress and how one should respond to that stress. Such thoughts, feelings and information about the environment, including the people and circumstances should be identified in the organization and this will allow how to deal with certain situations and what can be done better in the future.Managers are in a unique position when it comes to workplace stress. As they are responsible for setting the pace, assigning tasks, and

fostering the social customs that govern the work group, management must be aware of the consequences of mismanaging and inducing stress. Managers should consistently discuss job satisfaction and professional and personal health with each of their subordinates one on one.

## **Managerial application**

This study provides several managerial implications for the pharmaceutical industry. Organizational factors and individual factors visibly indicate the impact of stress, companies need to give a good atmosphere to the employees and an extra level of assurance of job security as it will develop a positive emotions by providing good organizational climate, this novel dimension will reflect an impact on productivity and efficiency of the workers. The findings of this study thus need to be acknowledged in implementing a healthy working environment. Careful and well-planned implementation strategies that consider the amount of work, transparency, role clarity, and training and development can provide a fruitful result to the employees and organization.

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