

Managing the Complaint Factors or Workplace Stress: A Study on Effects of Stress among Employees in ITES-BPO Organizations of NCR

* Dr. Rupali Arora

Effulgence

Vol. 14 No. 1

January - June, 2016

Rukmini Devi Institute of Advanced Studies

E-mail : effulgence@rdias.ac.in, Website : www.rdias.ac.in

<http://effulgence.rdias.ac.in/user/default.aspx>

<https://dx.doi.org/10.33601/effulgence.rdias/v14/i1/2016/01-09>

Abstract

In the 21st century business environment, stress has become a way of life—an accepted occupational hazard. As a result of external or internal pressures employees develop various symptoms of stress that can harm their job performance. If the stress is positive, the result may be more energetic, enthusiasm and motivation. Organizations should be aware of and accept that the problem of job stress exists; try to identify the problem; attempt to solve the problem and also find ways of coping with job stress. This article focuses on deriving the trouble/complaint factors and analyzing the extent of stress gender and marital status wise among the employees of the ITeS-BPO Companies.

Key Words: *Job Stress, Burnout, Employee's vulnerability, Information and Communication Technology, call-floor executives, Stress-Tolerance potential.*

INTRODUCTION

The IT-ITeS industry has continued to perform its role as the most consistent growth driver for the economy. Indian IT-ITES industry revenue is estimated at USD 105 billion in FY2013-14 as compare to USD 95.2 billion in FY2012-13, registering an increase of around 10.3%. The IT-ITES sector is a large employment generator and has catalyzed the growth of several ancillary industries such as transportation, real estate and catering, security and housekeeping, etc. The total IT Software and Services employment is estimated to touch 3.1million in 2013-14. The indirect employment attributed by the sector is estimated at about 10 million in 2013-14. IT-ITeS exports constitute the major source of employment in this industry and its share has increased over the years. NASSCOM, the industry body, projects that by 2020 the IT sector would provide direct employment to about 10 million individuals and indirectly to about 20 million individuals.

Domestic IT-ITES revenue (excluding hardware) is estimated to reach INR 1147 billion in FY 2013-14, as compared to INR 1041 billion in FY 2012-13, a Y-o-Y growth of ~10%. During FY 2013-14, domestic IT services growth is likely to be at 9.7% as large enterprises exhibit cautious spending pattern; driven by technology upgrades in BFSI, telecom and State Governments, and compliance of MIS investments. The domestic BPO services growth is estimated at ~12% in FY2013-14, driven by demand from select customers reverting to outsourcing business processes, especially from the BFSI, automotive and retail sectors.

The rapid growth in India's IT-ITeS sector is in large part an outcome of the liberalization of trade and investment regulations in this industry. Duties on imports of IT products have been liberalized in the post-1991 period. Relaxation of controls on both inward and outward investments and foreign exchange along with fiscal incentives provided by the Central Government

and State governments in the form of tax and subsidy measures have contributed to this growth.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Addressing or managing stress within an organization is a process that deserves planning and commitment on the part of the management team and is not something that will happen overnight. The theoretical, conceptual, and literature input as below makes clear that without satisfied and supportive employees, an organization cannot realize improvements in operations, customer service, or any other profit generating initiative.

The word stress is derived from the Latin word “stringere” which means “to be drawn tight”. The term stress has been comprehensively defined by Selye (1956) as “an adoptive response to the external situation that results in physical, psychological, and/or behavioural deviation for organisational participants”. It is the body’s reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress is a subjective feeling or tension experienced in the physical, mental and / or emotional realms as a response to environmental events that are perceived as threatening.

Traditionally the causes of workplace stress were very general and related to job demands, support of colleagues and management to opportunities for promotion and recognition of work within the organization. There are a few behavioural scientists who have defined the causes of stress in the workplace. According to them stress is a situation which is caused by-feeling of helplessness and inability to influence a situation, the lack of adequate planning and management, work overload and work underload, lack of authority and clarity about organizational relationships, inadequate feedback on performance and inadequate recognition, and promotion concerns.

The deteriorating effects of stress are multifaceted. Apart from its direct influence on performance high level of stress can also lead to other problems like physical ailments, behavioural and emotional disorders, organizational problems etc.

It becomes imperative for any organization as well as an individual to overcome stress by resorting to certain coping measures. Coping denotes the way of dealing with stress, or the effort to master conditions of harm, threat, or challenge when a routine or automatic response is not readily available (Lazarus, 1974). Over the years, many coping techniques have been advocated by researchers to manage stress. A few of the important techniques used at individual level are, critical analysis and recognition of problems, time management, physical exercises, yoga, meditation, maintain better family relationship, and trust in oneself. Batlivala (1990) concluded that there is no one best stress reducing technique and each person learns from his/her own personal experience how to transform stress into an asset.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A lot of research has been conducted to examine factors that affect employee stress. A few notable studies which have made significant contribution to existing literature on employee stress have been summarized as under:

Upinder Dhar and Binwa Arora July (2001) made their investigation into the nature of relationship between convergent – divergent thinking, job satisfaction, experience and job stress. The job stress is a result of several factors. Change in life styles and breaking down of traditional value systems, work being increased; work deadlines and high level of competitiveness with in and among organizations are among a few causes. Overall, the findings of the study provided considerable support for the conceptualization of relationship between job stress and employee satisfaction.

Mehra Payal (2004) conducted a research with the primary objective to determine stress levels across age, profession, and type of job, and duration of work. Two questionnaires were devised to collect data in a scientific manner. Among the various findings of the study, the paper led to the very important perspective that profession and type of job definitely impact upon the work stress that an individual suffers from. Stress is not age specific it can occur to any individual irrespective of

age. At the end the author also suggested five steps which will help an individual to reduce his/her stress level in specific and to the organisation in general.

Vanitha V. et al (2006) made a study to analyze the organizational commitment and stress among the IT (Information Technology) professionals. Differences between male and female IT professionals were also examined in this regard. Results, based on the study of various variables, revealed that organizational commitment and stress among IT professionals is high and that gender and experience of the professionals do not influence these factors.

R. Kayastha, P.R. Adhikary & V. Krishnamurthy (2012) made an exploratory study of occupational stress among executive officers of Nepal. The main objective of the study was to find out the significance relationship between the occupational stressors among executive officers of Nepal. Scores on the stress scale using a t-test of significance between correlated means. The results showed that among executive officers of Nepal do experience stress from work.

Sindhu Sivan and K. Sathyamoorthy (2014) in their paper on Management of Occupational Stress and Work-life balance Among Women Managers in Indian Industries - A Contemporary Issue focuses on what are the facets in women manager's lives that leads to stress, how can stress be managed and improving work-life balance. The paper also highlighted the coping strategies that can be viewed as a provision of success so that women are encouraged to come forward and embrace managerial positions. At the end while concluding the authors have suggested that in order to advance women in managerial role, support by top management is essential by taking up proactive human resource policies and programmes.

Sushma Rani (2014) examines the relationship between Job Stress and Employee Retention and consequences of high stress on Indian Industries. The findings of this research paper are that there are certain tools and techniques that can condense the job stress to a definite point. It is further suggested that the employees must use

self judgment programmes to calculate their work and to find out the areas they lack in.

NEED AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The literature review has indicated that a key business priority for organizations across the entire knowledge sector world-wide today, is to attract and retain talent to address exponential opportunities for growth that are coming their way. In the Information Technology Enabled Services-Business Process Outsourcing Industry, this is further accentuated by a combination of factors that include the type of work and work timings, a demand -supply gap in employable talent and their consequent mobility coupled with stringent performance criterion and specific characteristics/needs of the employable workforce. So even as an employing company focuses on meeting customer and stake-holder objectives and being globally 'best in class', it needs to also redouble its focus to understand the special needs /objectives of its knowledge employees so as to control their stress levels or to reduce the employees vulnerability to stress and initiate action that address core issues.

Addressing or managing complaint factors or effects of stress within an organization is a process that deserves planning and commitment on the part of the management team and is not something that will happen overnight. Many companies make an effort to address specific elements related to this issue, but very few actually analyze every component to ensure a comprehensive approach for managing this aspect. Stress has become a common phenomenon of our daily work life. It is one of the most important factors influencing individual efficacy and satisfaction in modern day occupational settings. This paper focuses on analyzing the effects of stress and understanding in detail the effects by:

1. Analyzing the vulnerability caused to employees due to stress by comparing the various dimensions of stress in terms of behavioural and health outcomes across gender and marital status ; and

2. To suggest possible ways and means of solving the issues of stress in ITES-BPO organizations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is undertaken to study the Effects of stress in employees from ITES-BPO Companies and finding out the relationship of the same w.r.t to gender and marital status of the respondent. ITES-BPO companies located at Delhi and NCR (National Capital Region) was the population for selecting the sample units. Hence the survey was limited to Delhi and NCR. The target population of employees of ITES-BPO include call-floor executives and operational managers at all levels but excluded back-end support staff from departments like HR and administration. ITES-BPO companies of each size (i.e. small, medium and large) were considered for this survey. The target population for the study comprised of employees of the companies located in this region and listed in the "Directory of IT Enabled Service Providers, 2006" published by NASSCOM, which is the apex body for this industry. There are 96 such companies as per this directory. At the first stage, 28 companies were selected randomly from the list of 96 companies. At the second stage, a simple random sample of 428 respondents has been taken for the purpose of the study from these 28 companies. The survey was conducted over a time period of five months from November 2009 to March 2010. In order to study this, the descriptive research design of investigation coupled with techniques of various statistical techniques was used. The primary data was collected to achieve the objectives of this study, particularly to measure vulnerability to stress and factors causing them. For this purpose a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was developed after discussions with Human Resource managers of a few ITES-BPO companies and individuals working therein. Also the questionnaire items for dimensions on satisfaction, attrition, and vulnerability caused to employees were developed from the inferences obtained through review of the subject. In order to avoid misinterpretations, the pre-testing of questionnaire was conducted on a pilot group selected from the population. A pilot study was conducted with a small sample size of 35 respondents to finalise the

questionnaire. The respondents provided comments on clarity of some items and confirmed face (expression) validity of items in the questionnaire. After pre-testing, the necessary modifications were incorporated in the original questionnaire. Nine items were used to measure the major effects of the work pressures in terms of behavioural and a health outcome for employees in ITES-BPO Companies. A 5-point likert scale (where Never = 1 and Almost Always = 5) was used to measure the vulnerability caused to employees of an ITES-BPO company. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) of these statements was 0.951.

Secondary data was used to understand the emerging trends regarding employment, total business, activities undertaken, growth and SWOT analysis of ITES-BPO Companies. The secondary sources used for the purpose of the study include reports of NASSCOM, CMIE, CII, FICCI and Ministry of Information Technology, reports published by Dataquest, various magazines, websites, journals and newspapers. The review of existing literature also helped in building the constructs of stress level with employees of ITES-BPO Companies.

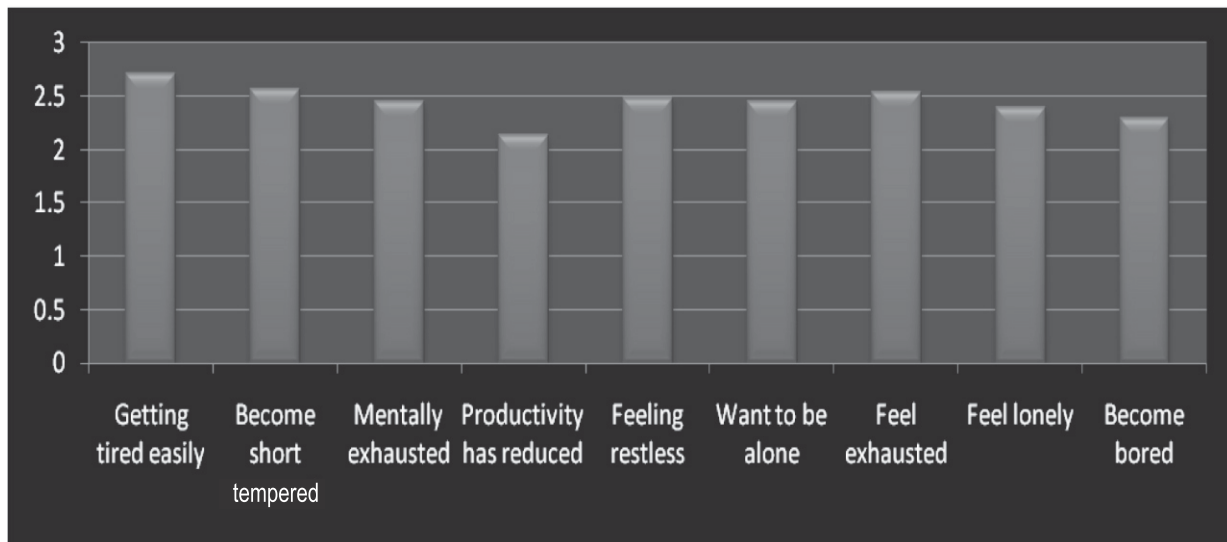
COMPARISON OF MEANS: ANOVA AND T-TEST ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of ANOVA applied to test the objectives proposed in this study. In this section, the average of these responses for different statements has been found and the significance of difference in the mean across demographic feature of respondents has been tested. Table 1 shows the mean score and standard deviation for the various factors which comes in the way of achieving or act as complaint/trouble factor in attaining employee satisfaction or leads to high level of stress. The mean score was found highest with **Getting tired easily (2.70)**. The second highest mean value (**2.56**) is observed with, **Become short tempered** the third highest mean score is observed to be (**2.44**) for **mentally exhausted**. Figure 1 is the diagrammatic representation of the mean score of complaint factors.

Table 1: Complaint factors leading to stress

Trouble/Complaint Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation
Getting tired easily	2.7048	1.19605
Become short tempered	2.5687	1.24399
Mentally exhausted	2.4450	1.27250
Productivity has reduced	2.1327	1.31912
Feeling restless	2.4811	1.25086
Want to be alone	2.4471	1.32705
Feel exhausted	2.5340	1.31112
Feel lonely	2.3990	1.36016
Become bored	2.2919	1.30521

Figure 1: Diagrammatic representation of the mean score of complaint factors.



Gender-wise Comparison of Complaint Factors

Table 2 below shows the gender-wise mean scores of Complaint Factors and it is clear that t-value turns significant for all the statements. Thus, the employees of two groups i.e. male and female differ in their opinion regarding the complaint factors. Thus, across the two groups of employees' i.e. male and female experience different level of vulnerability regarding symptoms prevailing due to stress. Similar results were found by (S.L.Kaushal, 2006) where the study that female employees are more exposed to tiredness and short temperedness than the male employees as modernisation, consumerism and westernization have altered the eating, wearing, and living styles of people. Undoubtedly, women work and want to earn and be independent and self-reliant. It gives women a way to actualize herself, gain self-esteem and confidence and ultimately most cherished gender equality. Hence the study gives a further scope of in-depth research in this area.

TABLE No. 2 ANOVA (Gender)

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Getting tired easily	Between Groups	84.018	17	4.942	3.855	.000
	Within Groups	515.372	402	1.282		
	Total	599.390	419			
Become short tempered	Between Groups	68.521	17	4.031	2.793	.000
	Within Groups	582.986	404	1.443		
	Total	651.507	421			
Mentally exhausted	Between Groups	69.420	17	4.084	2.696	.000
	Within Groups	605.815	400	1.515		
	Total	675.234	417			
Productivity has reduced	Between Groups	54.407	17	3.200	1.907	.016
	Within Groups	678.162	404	1.679		
	Total	732.569	421			
Feeling restless	Between Groups	79.027	17	4.649	3.238	.000
	Within Groups	582.822	406	1.436		
	Total	661.849	423			
Want to be alone	Between Groups	50.682	17	2.981	1.745	.033
	Within Groups	680.155	398	1.709		
	Total	730.837	415			
Feel exhausted	Between Groups	70.394	17	4.141	2.565	.001
	Within Groups	636.131	394	1.615		
	Total	706.524	411			
Feel lonely	Between Groups	63.490	17	3.735	2.111	.006
	Within Groups	704.269	398	1.770		
	Total	767.760	415			
Become bored	Between Groups	68.404	17	4.024	2.507	.001
	Within Groups	641.988	400	1.605		
	Total	710.392	417			

Marital status-wise Comparison of Complaint Factors

People at different stages of family life cycle in terms of marital status may have different needs and circumstances. Consequently, there may exist difference in the perception level of complaint factors becoming an obstacle for employee satisfaction experienced by the employees of two groups viz. married and single from various factors of employee satisfaction.

Table 3 depicts mean scores, t-value and significance level of various complaint factors between the married and single group of the employees. The t-test has been conducted to find out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean values of each of the dimensions of vulnerability faced by employees due to stress between married and single employees working in ITeS-BPO companies. The data analysis exhibits that there is no significant difference at 5 per cent level between the mean values of each of the dimensions between married and single employees. Thus, both married as well as single employees experience same level of stress on each of the dimensions.

Further, Model Summary in Table 4 reveals the study to be acceptable due to the score of Durbin Watson lying in the range of 2.

TABLE No. 3 ANOVA (Marital Status)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Getting tired easily	Between Groups	13.730	1	13.730	9.800	.002
	Within Groups	585.660	418	1.401		
	Total	599.390	419			
Become short tempered	Between Groups	7.183	1	7.183	4.682	.031
	Within Groups	644.324	420	1.534		
	Total	651.507	421			
Mentally exhausted	Between Groups	.198	1	.198	.122	.727
	Within Groups	675.036	416	1.623		
	Total	675.234	417			
Productivity has reduced	Between Groups	2.339	1	2.339	1.345	.247
	Within Groups	730.230	420	1.739		
	Total	732.569	421			
Feeling restless	Between Groups	.558	1	.558	.356	.551
	Within Groups	661.291	422	1.567		
	Total	661.849	423			
Want to be alone	Between Groups	.002	1	.002	.001	.976
	Within Groups	730.835	414	1.765		
	Total	730.837	415			
Feel exhausted	Between Groups	.017	1	.017	.010	.922
	Within Groups	706.508	410	1.723		
	Total	706.524	411			
Feel lonely	Between Groups	1.180	1	1.180	.637	.425
	Within Groups	766.580	414	1.852		
	Total	767.760	415			
Become bored	Between Groups	3.443	1	3.443	2.026	.155
	Within Groups	706.949	416	1.699		
	Total	710.392	417			

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.250 ^a	.063	.041	3.80122	1.648
a. Predictors: (Constant), Become bored, Getting tired easily, Productivity has reduced, Want to be alone, Feel lonely, Become short tempered, Feel exhausted, Mentally exhausted, Feeling restless					
b. Dependent Variable: Gender					

CONCLUSION

Companies should explore in detail the causes due to which employees get exposed to various dimensions leading to stress or thus become vulnerable to stress. Stress in job life can be managed, to a large extent, through various organizational coping strategies. Work for this generation is about freedom and flexibility. They want to work hard, have fun, as well as contribute at the workplace. Also, an organization through establishment of health clubs, creating a supportive organizational climate, and by providing comfortable working conditions can help employees in coping with these dimensions. Engaging employees, helping them realize their potential and giving them the opportunity with the company is the mantra of new age managers.

REFERENCES

- 1) Anju Mehta, Achilles Armenakis, Nikhil Mehta and Feruzan Irani (2006), "Challenges and Opportunities of Business Process Outsourcing in India", *Journal of Labour Research*, Vol.xxvii, No.3, pp323-337.
- 2) Apte, Uday and Mason, Richard, (1995), "Global Disintegrate of Information-Intensive Services", *Management Science*, Vol.41, No.7, pp1250-1263.
- 3) Anupama D Raina (2006), "Management of Call Center-Boredom, Employee Attrition and Retention", *The ICFAI Journal of Organizational Behaviour*.
- 4) Bhide, S., Vani, B.P and Rajeev, M (2005), "Outsourcing Business Processes to Offshore Location: the Indian Experience", Paper presented at the 30th Annual Conference of the Federation of Asian Economic Association, Manila.
- 5) Bhushan Malini, "Employee Retention in Indian Call Centers", *Alliance Anthology of Cases*, pp40-42.
- 6) "BPO Industry must Overcome Challenges" (September 8, 2003), *The Hindu BusinessLine*.
- 7) Callaghan G., Thompson P. (2001), "Edwards Revisited: Technical Control and Call centers", *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. 22, Issue 1, pp13-37.
- 8) Chen, L.H. (2008), "Job Satisfaction among Information System (IS) Personnel", *Computers in Human Behaviour*, Vol.24, Issue 1, pp105-118.
- 9) D.G. Prasuna (2003), "BPO: Sustaining the Competitive Advantage", *Chartered Financial Analyst*, p.1.
- 10) Deepak Shikarpur, (2004), "BPO Digest", *Ameya Inspiring Books*, Pune.
- 11) Dr. Zafrul Allam, (2007), "Stress among Call Center Executives: An Empirical Study", *HRD News letter*, Vol.22, Issue 10, p 281.
- 12) Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and industry (URL://http://commin.nic.in).
- 13) Hulin C.L. and Smith P.C, (1964), "Sex Differences in Job Satisfaction", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol.48, pp88-92.
- 14) India's Software Edge, (2nd December 2003), *The Economic Times*, New Delhi.
- 15) Indian IT Industry: NASSCOM Analysis Report (2007), (URL:http://www.nasscom.in)
- 16) Indian ITeS-BPO Industry: NASSCOM Analysis Report (2006-07), (URL:http://www.nasscom.in).
- 17) Indian Software and Services Exports (URL:http://www.nasscom.org).
- 18) Karnik Allays, (2003), "Fears on Outsourcing". *The Hindu Business Line*, p.7.
- 19) Key Highlights of the NASSCOM-IDC Study on the Domestic Services (IT-ITES) Market Opportunity, (2006-07).
- 20) Leavy, B. (2004), "Outsourcing Strategies: Opportunities and Risk", *Strategy and Leadership*, Vol. 32, No.6, pp 20-25.
- 21) Ivancevich J.M. and Donnelly J.H. (1968), "Job Satisfaction Research: A Management Guide for Practitioners", *Personnel Journal*, Vol. 47, March, pp173.
- 22) Jayaseetha R. and Murthy (1989): "Job Satisfaction and Mental Health", *Journal of Psychometry*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp31-34.
- 23) Jick TD, Mitz LF. Sex Differences in work stress, *Academy of Management review*, 1985, Vol.10: pp408-420
- 24) Joe Kavanaugh, Jo Ann Duffy and Juliana Lilly (2006), "The Relationship Between Job Satisfaction and Demographic Variables for Healthcare

- Professionals”, *Management Research News*, Vol.29, No.6, pp304-325.
- 25) Kelleberg S. Sr. (1983), “Spirit of Industrial Relations”, Oxford University Press, London.
 - 26) Khaleque A. and Choudhari N. (1984), “Job Facets and Overall Job Satisfaction of Industrial Managers”, *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 20, No. 2.
 - 27) Knoop R. (1995), “Relationship among Job Involvement, Job Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment for Nurses”, *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 126, No. 6, pp643-649.
 - 28) Kayastha R., P.R. Adhikary & V. Krishnamurthy (2012) Correlates of Occupational Stress among Executive Officers of Nepal, *IJRRAS*, 12 (1) pp101-106.
 - 29) Karen D. Rudolph, Constance Hammen Age and Gender as Determinants of Stress Exposure, Generation, and Reactions in Youngsters: A Transactional Perspective *Child Development* Volume 70, Issue 3, pages 660–677, May/June 1999.
 - 30) Mamoria C.B. (1980), “Personnel Management”, Himalaya Publishing House Bombay.
 - 31) Mehra Payal, (2004), “Study on stress Levels in Organisations and Impact on Employee Behaviour”, *IJTD Journal*, Vol.xxxiv, No.1, pp.91-101.
 - 32) Nelson DL, Quick J.C. Professional Women: Are distress and disease inevitable? *Academy of management review*, (1985), Vol.10 pp: 206-218.
 - 33) Patel M K (1998), “A Study of Organizational Health and Organizational Commitment among Industrial Employees” *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp63-79.
 - 34) Singh, Hira and D.H. Pastonfee (1991), “Job Involment, Sense of Participation and Job Satisfaction-A Study in Banking Industry”, *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp263-379.
 - 35) Sindhu Sivan Dr. K. Sathyamoorthy (2014) “Management Of Occupational Stress and Work-life balance Among Women Managers In Indian Industries - A Contemporary Issue”, *Indian Journal of Applied Research* Volume - 4, Issue - 12.
 - 36) Srivastava A.K. and A. Krishna (1993), “Employees Job Involvement and Monetary Benefit in Public and Private Sector Organizations-A Comparative Study”, *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 28, pp78-80.
 - 37) Srivastava A.V. and A. Krishna (1993), “Employees Job Involvement and Mental Health in Public and Private Sector Organizations-A Comparative Study” *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations* Vol.28, pp78-80.
 - 38) Sushma Rani (2014) Effects of Job Stress on Employee Retention: A Study in Context of Indian Industries, *International Journal of Research in Management, Science & Technology* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp 28-35.
 - 39) Upinder Dhar Binwa Arora(1996) “Thinking, experience and job stress an empirical study “ *Psycho-lingua Psycholinguistic Association of India*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp 111-116.
 - 40) Vanitha V., Vasanthi M., Kamalanabhan and Sivasabramanian T.A. (2006), “A Study on Organizational Commitment and Stress among Information Technology Professionals”, *The ICAFI Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, Vol.35, pp 69-80.