

A Study on Occupational Stress among Railway Employees with Special Reference to Thrissur Railway Station

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ABSTRACT

Indian railway is one of the income generating industries in India. The industry is a success because of its efficient staff. They are valuable assets of the industry and the key to success. The employees in the Indian railway are experiencing a tremendous amount of pressure at the work place. Increased workloads, overtime, hostile work environment and shift work are just a few causes of stressful working conditions. In such a situation it is necessary to study the occupational stress of railway employees because if not controlled, it can affect the person's family or social life, health, performance etc. hence in the study an attempt has been made to find out the major sources and causes of stress and gather knowledge about the techniques to lower stress. The results of the study show that the employees are facing stressful situations in their work place and they are well aware of the techniques to lower stress.

Key words: Indian Railway, Employees, Stressful Working Conditions, Occupational Stress

INTRODUCTION

One of the important functions of the modern management is to get things done through people. It has to bring employees in conduct with the organization in such a way that the objectives of both the groups are achieved. The most significant resource of an organization is often said to be its people. Hence human resources play a crucial role in the development process of modern management. There are many factors which affect the productivity and ability of a person. One among them is stress.

Stress is an all pervading modern phenomenon that takes a heavy toll on human life. Generally, it is a condition of pressure or tension on an individual that affects individual's health and performance at the workplace. Many organizations are facing day-to-day challenges to handle stress in a proper way. Out of all types of stress occupational stress of an employee is very important. Occupational stress is known to affect all professions and category of workers. It is of great concern to management, employees and other stakeholders of the organization. The nature and degree of occupational stress vary across the industry and also in business establishments within an industry. Occupational stress is the result of the interaction of an individual with the work environment and as every job has its own typical environment and every person is different from another. The nature and effect of stress changes from job to job and persons to persons. Occupational stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it. It is a mental and a physical condition which affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S. Kumar [2016] has made an attempt to study about the 'Occupational stress among BPO workers'. The main objectives of this study were to know the level of occupational stress among BPO workers and to know the difference in occupational stress among male and female BPO workers. The hypotheses were made and a sample of 50 BPO workers was randomly selected from different BPO workers station in Gulbarga City. The study revealed that BPO workers have moderate occupational stress and there is no significant difference in occupational stress among male and female BPO workers.

G. Indhumathi and M. Thirumakkal [2015] have conducted a study to investigate the 'Impact of Stress on Productivity of Employees at the Pothys Boutique, A Textile Showroom.' This was a descriptive study and the main goal was to find the impact of stress on productivity in the organization. Thus the study helped to elucidate descriptive information on the impact of stress on employees at the Pothys Boutique. The sampling used for this study is stratified random sampling. 80 employees of the boutique were the respondents. Questionnaires were distributed to all the employees. The result showed that there were many stress factors which affected their productivity negatively. The important fact was that majority of employees feel that the organization did not care about them. This was a huge reflection of dissatisfaction that undoubtedly lowered productivity.

OBJECTIVES

- To find out the major sources and causes of stress.
- Be more aware of the techniques to lower stress.

METHODOLOGY

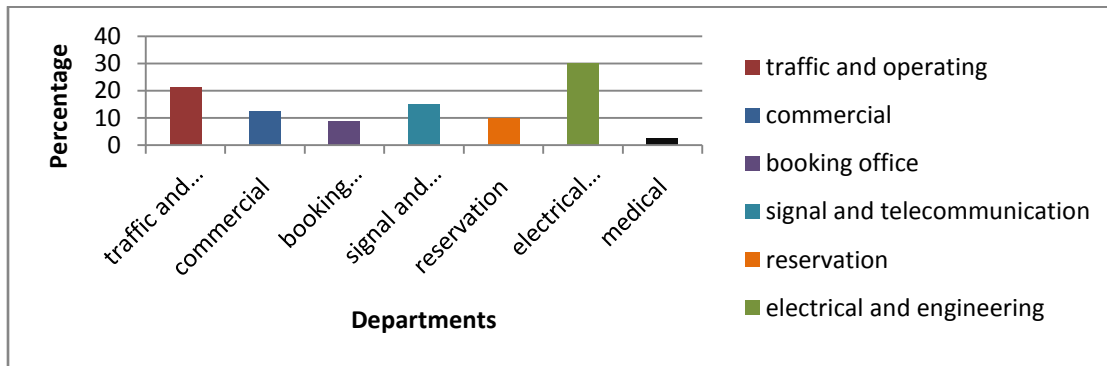
The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected by distributing questionnaires among employees using purposive sampling. The sample size comprised of 80 employees of Thrissur Railway Station. Secondary data were collected from journals, magazines, internet etc. Percentages, pie diagrams and charts were used for analyzing the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 – Department Wise Classification

Department	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Traffic and operating	17	21.25
Commercial	10	12.5
Booking office	7	8.75
Signal and Telecommunication	12	15
Reservation	8	10
Electrical and Engineering	24	30
Medical	2	2.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data



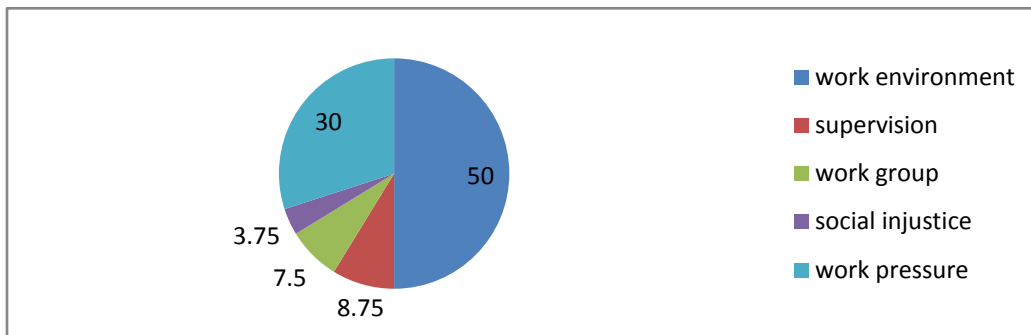
The above table and chart depict that majority of the respondents belong to electric and engineering department followed by other departments.

Table 2- Reasons for Stress of the Respondents

Reasons for Stress	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Work environment	40	50
Supervision	7	8.75
Workgroup	6	7.5

Social injustice	3	3.75
Work pressure	24	30
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

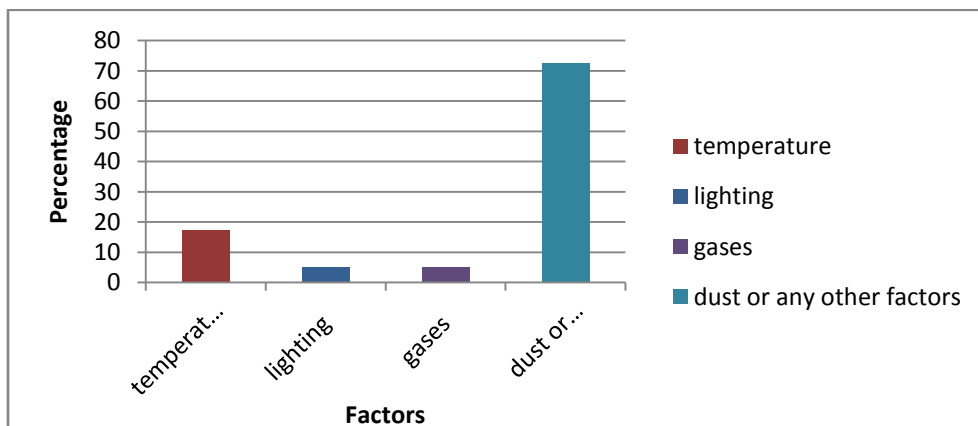


The table and chart reveal that half of the respondents' stress arises because of their work environment. Only a few respondents opined social injustice as the reason for their stress.

Table 3- Factors that Cause Stress in the Workplace

Factors	No of respondents	Percentage
Temperature	14	17.5
Lighting	4	5
Gases	4	5
Dust or any other factors	58	72.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

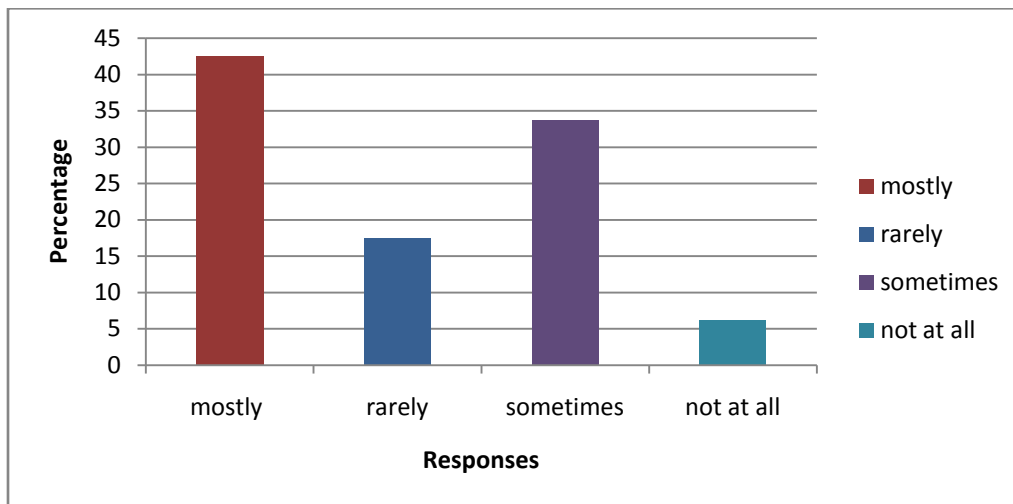


The table and chart infer that majority of the respondents consider dust or other factors as the reason for stress in the work place followed by other factors.

Table 4- Overtime Work of Employees

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Mostly	34	42.5
Rarely	14	17.5
Sometimes	27	33.75
Not at all	5	6.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

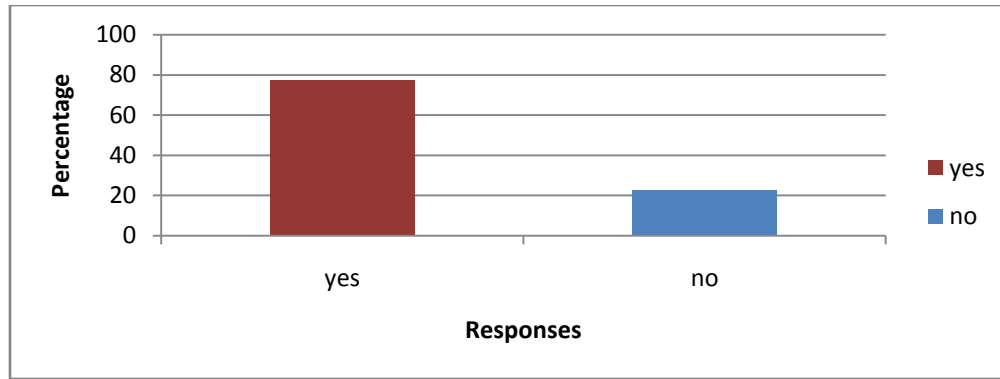


The table and chart show that a major portion of respondents mostly does overtime work.

Table 5- Adverse Effect of Overtime Work on Respondents

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	62	77.5
No	18	22.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

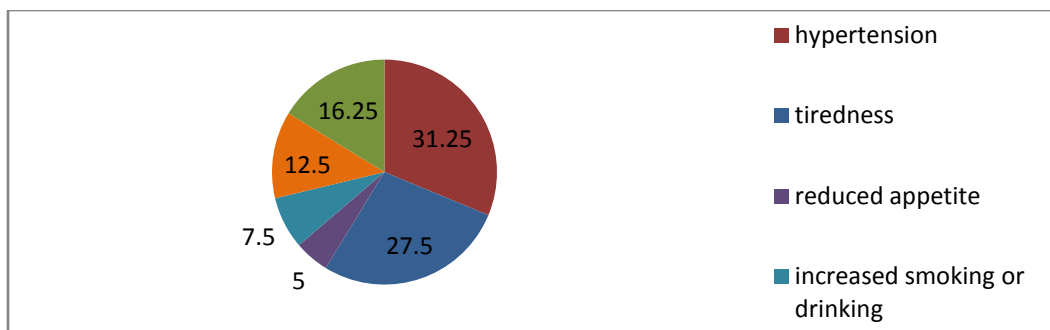


The table and chart depict that overtime work adversely affects the respondents' work.

Table 6 – Symptoms of Stress

Symptoms of Stress	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Hypertension	25	31.25
Tiredness	22	27.5
Reduced appetite	4	5
Increased smoking or drinking	6	7.5
Frequent headaches	10	12.5
Frequent mood swings	13	16.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

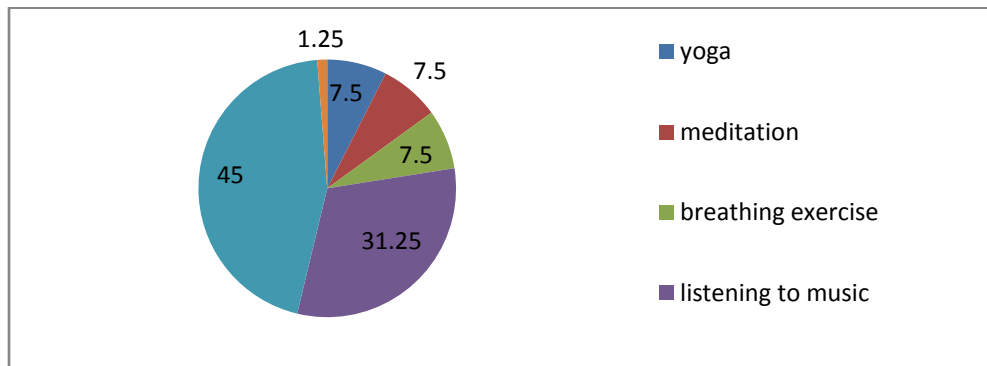


It can be viewed from the above table and chart that 31.25% of respondents consider hypertension as the symptom of stress followed by tiredness and frequent mood swings. Only a small percentage has reduced appetite as a symptom of stress.

Table 7 – Techniques Used to Lower Stress

Techniques	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yoga	6	7.5
Meditation	6	7.5
Breathing exercise	6	7.5
Listening to music	25	31.25
Spending quality time with family and friends	36	45
Others	1	1.25
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

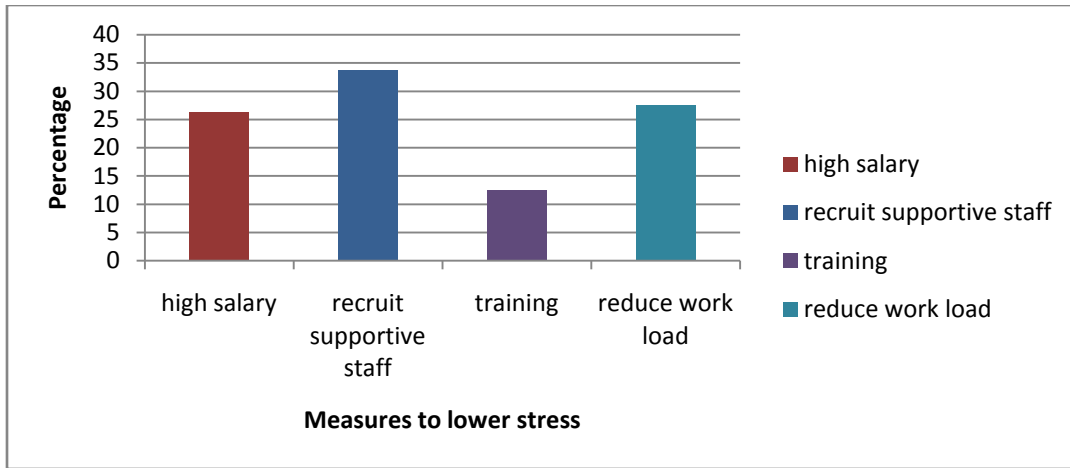


The table and chart indicate that 45% of respondents spend quality time with their family and friends for reducing stress. 31.25% of them listen to music followed by yoga, meditation, and breathing exercise.

Table 8–Measures to be Taken by the Management to Lower Stress: from Employees’ Point of View

Measures	No. of Respondents	Percentage
High salary	21	26.25
Recruit supportive staff	27	33.75
Training	10	12.5
Reduce workload	22	27.5
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data

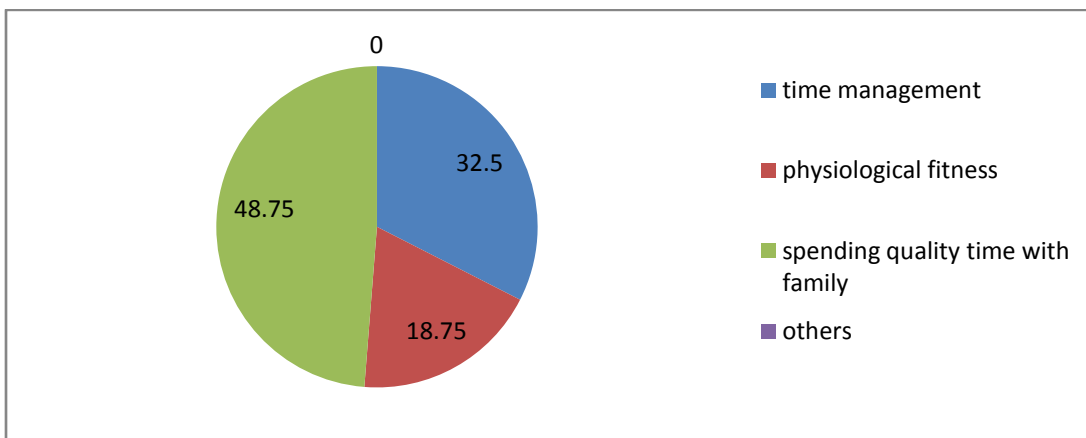


It is clear from the above table and chart that majority of the respondents opined that the management should recruit supportive staff to lower stress followed by other measures.

Table 9 – Stress Management Methods Recommended by the Respondents

Stress Management Methods	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Time management	26	32.5
Physiological fitness	15	18.75
Spending quality time with family	39	48.75
Others	-	-
Total	80	100

Source: Primary Data



It is evident from the above that 48.75% respondents suggested spending quality time with family is the best technique to lower stress. 32.5% of them recommended time management as a good technique to lower stress and the rest of them opted physiological fitness.

FINDINGS

1. Majority of the employees responded that they feel stressed mostly because of their work environment.
2. Dust or other factors are the main reason that caused stress in their workplace.
3. Most of the employees consider overtime work causes stress in them and it has an adverse effect on their work.
4. Hypertension and tiredness are considered to be the symptoms of stress experienced by most of the employees.
5. Listening to music and spending quality time with their family are the techniques used by the employees to lower stress.
6. Employees suggested that the management should provide high salary or recruit supportive staff to lower the stress of the employees.
7. Most of the employees recommended that spending quality time with their family and proper time management can help to reduce stress.

CONCLUSION

Every organization is comprised of people. Maximum productivity can be attained only when the employees are relieved from the stressful situations. The study revealed that most of the employees face stress situation because of the work environment in the organization and overtime work. They consider hypertension and tiredness as the major symptoms of stress. The employees use various techniques like yoga, meditation, spending quality time with family and friends to lower their stress. But still, the management should take reasonable measures to reduce their stress because the employees are the asset of any organization. So they should be taken care of properly because railway is a major source of income generating industry in India.

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