



## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT AND MANAGEMENT

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## A STUDY OF ROLE STRESS AMONG TWO INDIAN GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Total stress at workplace may account for 1-10% GDP of the country. India has a mixed economy. Although, country is liberalizing to some extent, but key regulating powers are still in the government hand. Therefore, government authorities are exposed to play a critical role in development of the country. Government employees are called upon to take important decisions regarding policies, plans, procedures etc. As they shoulder critical responsibilities, they are required to have a sound physical and mental health. This research study empirically assesses the occupational stress among the employees of two important government organizations namely archaeological survey of India (ASI), Agra and District Treasury office of Agra. The analysis has been done using ORS scale. This scale comprises of ten role stressors; Inter-role distance, Role Stagnation, Role Erosion Conflict, Role Erosion, Role Overload, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy, Self-role distance, Role Ambiguity, Resource Inadequacy indicate key findings as well. The finding reveals that the government employees are facing moderate level of stress. The research established that Resource inadequacy is the most potent stressor. It also identifies that Role Erosion and Role Expectation Conflict has a significant impact on the stress level of employees in different government organizations.

### KEYWORDS

Occupational Stress, government, ORS scale etc.

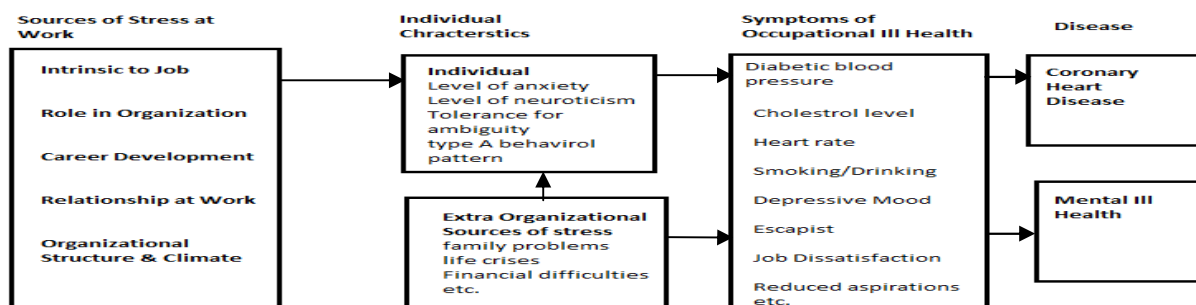
### INTRODUCTION

Indian society is undergoing rapid changes due to many contemporary trends in the form of industrialization, liberalization, modernization, automation etc. These changes have impacted the health profile of employees. Workload has been increased in many folds. Employees are called upon to spent additional time in their workplace. They are given deadline to finish tasks. That creates stress among them. Stress is the adverse reaction which people experience due to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them (Water & Usery, 2007). In simple words, stress occurs when external demands exceeds from the internal capabilities of a person. Stress is generally associated with negative outcomes. But it may not true always. Every stress is not harmful and dysfunctional in nature. Research in this field indicates that moderate amount of stress combined with appropriate responses can actually benefit both the individual and the organization (Chusmir & Franks, 1988).

Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses which occur when the demands of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers (Sauter & Murphy, 1999). Stress is the inevitable part of human life. It can't be totally removed from anybody's life. We can attempt to reduce stress. Stress can be minimized when one is helped to understand how stress occurs, what the consequences of stress are and how it can be coped (Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007). This organizational stress directly impacts the health profile of the employees. Government employees are also vulnerable to stress. Stress impacts those professions where employees are called upon to deal with the general public directly. Government functioning directly affects the common people. Government employees shoulder greater responsibilities in comparison to private sector employees as they are the regulating entities and they have to formulate the governing policies. It is therefore imperative that they must have a sound mental and physical health.

A person encounters many stressors during course of his work. Stressors can be grouped in two categories: *job related stressors* and *individual related stressors*. Researchers have classified occupational stress in different ways. Physical environment, role stressors, organizational structure, job characteristics, relationship with others, career development and work-family conflict can be the stressors among employees (Burke, 1993). They may also be categorised as factors intrinsic to the job, management role, relationship with others, career and achievement, organizational structure and climate, home/work interface may be the stressors among people at workplace (Cooper, C.L. & Marshall J. 1976). The model is given in the Figure 1. The factors intrinsic to the may be too much or too little work, poor working conditions, time pressure etc. The factors related to role in organization may be role ambiguity, no participation in decision making etc. The stressors under the head of career development may be under or over promotion, job insecurity etc. Company vs. Family demands, company vs. Own interests may be stressors under home/work interface. Organizational Structure may contain stressors like restriction on behaviour, office politics etc. Poor relationship with boss, peers and subordinates may also create work stress. Finally stress can also be varied due to personality, coping capabilities and behavioural pattern of the individual manager.

**1.1 FIGURE 1: OCCUPATIONAL STRESS MODEL**



Source: Cooper & Marshall, 1976



Stress can be measured using varied instruments. In this paper, our focus is on role stress. ORS, developed by Pareek (1983), is a popular instrument of measuring role stress. This scale measures respondents' quantum of stress in terms of total ORS scores. It also measures the intensity of ten role stressors contributing to total ORS score. The ten role stressors are-

**Inter Role Distance (IRD):** conflict between the organizational and non-organizational roles

**Role Stagnation (RS):** feeling of being stuck in the same role

**Role Expectation Conflict (REC):** conflicting expectations and demands by the different role senders

**Role Erosion (RE):** feeling that functions which should belong to incumbent's role are being transformed/performed or shared by other roles

**Role Overload (RO):** feeling that too much is expected from the role than what the occupant can cope with

**Role Isolation (RI):** lack of linkages of one's role with other roles in the organization

**Personal Inadequacy (PI):** lack of knowledge, skills or adequate preparation to be effective in a particular role

**Self-Role Distance (SRD):** conflict of one's values and self-concepts with the requirements of the organizational role

**Role Ambiguity (RA):** lack of clarity about expectations of others from the role, or lack of feedback on how performance is regarded by others

**Resource Inadequacy (RIn):** non-availability of resources needed for effective role performance

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, there have been a number of studies which attempt to understand phenomenon of occupational stress among government employees. Some ORS scale (Pareek, 1983c) based studies done are as follows-

Sharma (1987) targeted managers and supervisors of public and private Pharmaceutical organization for his study. His aim was to ascertain the role of motivated climate on four psychological variables- Job satisfaction, participation, alienation and role stress. The respondents were 150 in number (75 managers and 75 supervisors). The findings of the research study indicates that the employees of public sector organizations scored lower and significantly differed from the employees of private sector organizations. However, the public sector employees scored significantly higher on role stagnation.

Choudhary (1990) conducted a study on 100 bank officers using ORS scale and Employers' Satisfaction Dissatisfaction Inventory (Pestonjee, 1973b) to probe the relationship between role stress and job satisfaction. Results showed that role erosion and resource inadequacy were experienced as dominant whereas role ambiguity and role expectation conflict as remote contributors of role stress among bank officers. The overall indices of role stress and job satisfaction were found to be negatively correlated in higher as well as lower age groups.

Srivastava (1991) conducted a study on 300 employees of supervisory cadre of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India. The study reported significant positive correlation of various dimensions of role stress with the symptoms of mental ill health. Stress arising from role ambiguity and role stagnation were most intensively correlated with anxiety.

Singhvi and Mathur (1997) carried out a study on officers of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The sample consisted of 19 gazetted officers and 32 non-gazetted officers. The study found that role erosion and inter role distance to be the most dominant whereas role ambiguity and role overload to be the least dominant contributors of role stress.

Pattanayak and Mishra (1997) carried out a comparative assessment between old and new public sector organizations in respect to ORS and quality of work life (QWL). The study covered 800 respondents including executives and non-executives both. Significant differences were observed between old and new public sector firms on all the ten dimensions of organizational role stress and total role stress. Similarly significant differences were found between executives and non-executives on all ORS dimensions and total role stress.

Talib (1999) carried out study on role stress among police personnel. The sample comprised 178 police personnel belonging to two groups viz, civil police and provincial arms constabulary (PAC) from Uttar Pradesh region. The study found that the inter role distance, resource inadequacy and role erosion were the dominant stressors for the police personnel. It was observed that more than 42% respondents were experiencing either medium high or high stress. The study found that role overload score was higher in civil police personnel. Overall PAC emerged as a far more stressed group. Inter role distance was found as a most potent stressor among both police and PAC.

Aziz (2003) conducted a research study on IT sector professionals. 257 employees from eight IT firms were administered to assess occupational role stress. The study established that the information technology professionals were experiencing a fair amount of role stress. It was also found that resource inadequacy, role stagnation and inter role distance were those stressors, which were emerged as top three contributors to overall organizational role stress among IT sector professionals.

Rishi et al (2004) studied 34 forest officers from Bhopal to identify different coping strategies used by them while facing multifarious role stressors. Projective Role PICS technique (Pareek, 1983b) was used to get the response. The results suggested that there was a positive and significant relationship between stress, avoidance strategies and type A personality. Forest officers having type A personality experienced more role stress and used more avoidance-based strategies to cope with it. Overall, 23.5% of the sample was found to be experiencing a high stress and ineffective coping styles.

Kaila (2004) conducted a study on 100 women managers to assess the stress and health aspects of women managers using in depth interviews in and out of Mumbai from diverse organizations. The study revealed that the factors like clashes with superiors, competition, dual responsibilities, meeting deadlines, lack of support from others, handling different type of clients, long working hours.

Nagar (2009) undertook a survey of sixty police personnel belonging to three hierarchical level of police organization (CSP, Inspector and Constables) during a soft skill training session to explore the occupational stress and health of the police personnel. Results revealed that 40% constables, 20% inspectors and 10% CSPs are facing high level of occupational stress. The common health complains reported by police personnel were high blood pressure, diabetes, Sciatica, arthritis, migraine, asthma and Gastric problems.

After analyzing the literature review, it is quite evident that stress research is a popular field of enquiry among management researchers. All aforementioned studies have highlighted different dimensions of the stress across varied occupational groups, sectors and national settings. The studies have also proposed various coping strategies. This also hints at the need of further exploration. It is found by most of the studied done on public sector employees that the government employees encounter lower stress. In this paper, we aim to study the stressors on the basis of the organization.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims at understanding the phenomenon of role stress among Government employees among various government organizations. The main objectives are mentioned below:

- To develop an overview of the most potent stressor of total occupational role stress (ORS)
- To study the variation of different stressors of ORS with government organizations

## HYPOTHESIS

- H<sub>0</sub> 1: There has been no significant variation of mean score on IRD as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
 H<sub>0</sub> 2: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RS as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
 H<sub>0</sub> 3: There has been no significant variation of mean score on REC as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
 H<sub>0</sub> 4: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RE as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
 H<sub>0</sub> 5: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RO as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
 H<sub>0</sub> 6: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RI as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations

H<sub>0</sub> 7: There has been no significant variation of mean score on PI as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
H<sub>0</sub> 8: There has been no significant variation of mean score on SRD as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
H<sub>0</sub> 9: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RA as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations  
H<sub>0</sub> 10: There has been no significant variation of mean score on RIn as a dimension of ORS with select govt organizations

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### TOOL USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Occupational Role Stress scale (ORS) has been used to generate data for the study. This scale measures quantum of stress in terms of total ORS scores. It also measures intensity of ten role stressors mentioned earlier. The respondents are required to indicate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from zero to four.

**TEST- RETEST RELIABILITY OF THE ORS SCALE:** The overall reliability of ORS scale is 0.73. This shows that ORS scale is highly reliable. On the other hand, the reliability of the three stressors are given in Table 1:

TABLE 1: RELIABILITY OF THE SCALE

S. No.	Variables	Coefficient	Level of Significance
1.	Inter Role Distance	0.58	.001
2.	Self-Role Distance	0.45	.001
3.	Role Erosion (RE)	0.37	.003
4.	Role Stagnation (RS)	0.63	.001
5.	Role Ambiguity	0.65	.001
6.	Role Overload	0.53	.001
7.	Role Inadequacy	0.58	.001
8.	Total Role Stress (ORS)	0.73	.001

Source: Pareek, 1983c

This shows that scale is reliable in all aspects.

### SAMPLE

The sample of the study is drawn from the Department of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Agra and District Treasury Board (DTB), Agra. The study includes 35 employees, in which, 24 belong to ASI and 11 are from DTB.

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data has been subject to analysis in the form of variables like ORS scores for public sector employees in which low, medium and high stress, comparison of stress of ASI and DTB employees, qualification, length of service, marital status and age has been considered. The grouping was done to ascertain the differences between the groups (Table 2). SPSS 16.0 was used to analyse the results. Findings were tabulated separately.

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHICAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S. No.	Variables	Details of Variables	Number of Respondents
1.	Education	Group A (Up to 12 standard) Group B (Graduate & P.G.) Group C (Doctorate)	10 21 4
2.	Age	Group A ( Up to 35 years) Group B (36-50 years) Group C (Above 50 years)	9 20 6
3.	Length of Service	Group A (1-10 years) Group B (11-20 years) Group C (21-30 years) Group D (31-36 years)	8 14 11 2
4.	Organization	Group A (District Treasury Board) Group B (ASI)	11 24

## RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

The study established that Government employees were experiencing Organizational Role Stress (ORS). The mean score for total ORS is 15.75, which is at a moderate level as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: STATUS OF STRESSORS

Stressors	Mean	SD	Rank	Status
IRD	1.87	0.889	3	Moderate
RS	1.56	1.04	5	Moderate
REC	1.388	0.881	6	Moderate
RE	2.08	0.868	2	High
RO	1.382	1.09	7	Moderate
RI	1.68	0.933	4	Moderate
PI	1.23	1.05	9	Moderate
SRD	1.34	0.724	8	Moderate
RA	1.07	0.965	10	Medium low
RIn	2.12	0.991	1	High
ORS	15.75	6.871		Moderate

**Note-** For the analysis purpose, the mean score has been calculated on scale ranging zero to four and we have divided the stress level in three categories namely Low Stress (0-1), Moderate Stress (1-2) and High Stress (More than 2 up to 4).

The table 3 shows that only two stressors (Resource Inadequacy RIn and Role Erosion RE) contributing for high stress category. The mean score for RIn (mean score 2.12) is highest among all ten role stressors among government employees. It shows that government employees are facing resource inadequacy the most. Role Erosion (RE) has emerged as the second most potent stressor with a mean score of 2.08. Third important stressor which has emerged is Inter Role Distance (IRD) with a mean score of 1.87. The standard deviation is highest for Role Overload (RO). It shows that some sections of employees are experiencing



the problem of RO more than rest of the employees. Finally, we can say that RIn, RE and IRD are the top three contributors to the total stress level among government employees.

TABLE 4: ANOVA VALUES OF DIFFERENT STRESSORS

Hypothesis	Stressor	f value	Remarks
H <sub>01</sub>	IRD	0.694	Not Rejected
H <sub>02</sub>	RS	0.832	Not Rejected
H <sub>03</sub>	REC	<b>0.013*</b>	Rejected
H <sub>04</sub>	RE	<b>0.001**</b>	Rejected
H <sub>05</sub>	RO	0.293	Not Rejected
H <sub>06</sub>	RI	0.067	Not Rejected
H <sub>07</sub>	PI	0.592	Not Rejected
H <sub>08</sub>	SRD	0.129	Not Rejected
H <sub>09</sub>	RA	0.081	Not Rejected
H <sub>010</sub>	RIn	0.796	Not Rejected
	ORS	0.100	Not Rejected

\*value is significant at 95% level of significance

\*\*value is significant at 99% level of significance

Table 4 is showing that on the basis of organization, the calculated value of Role Expectation Conflict (REC) and Role Erosion (RE) is significant. Data interprets that only two hypotheses are rejected and most of hypotheses are not rejected. There is a significant difference in REC (Role Expectation Conflict) between organizations and there is a strong significant difference in RE (Role Erosion) between organizations.

## CONCLUSION

The study has been conducted in two different government organizations to assess the most potent stressors among government employees. It has been concluded from the study that government employees are experiencing the moderate level of stress. It is further explored from the study that Resource Inadequacy is the most potent stressor followed by Role Erosion and Inter Role Distance. The study also assessed that Role Erosion and Role Expectation Conflict have significant impact on total stress level of employees.

## MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study explores that government authorities should design their strategies in such a manner that resource inadequacy and role erosion may be reduced in order to have sound physical and mental health of government employees which results in the enhancement of the overall productivity of the government organizations.

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