

# Occupational Stress and Yoga

S Suganthra Devi<sup>1</sup>, Karaline Karunagiri D<sup>2</sup>

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**Author's Affiliations:** <sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Principal, Rani Meyyammai College of Nursing, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu 608002, India.

**Corresponding Author:** Karaline Karunagiri D, Principal, Rani Meyyammai College of Nursing, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu 608002, India.

**E-mail:** oprcon09@gmail.com

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**Abstract**

All the people round the world need to work hard to meet their daily needs which circumstances affect individual's physical and mental condition that leads to the reduction of individual's life qualities. Job stress was identified as an upcoming stressors that provoke for many physical, mental and social irrational consequences. Occupational stress is related to one's job which is a result of unexpected responsibilities and pressures that do not align with a person's knowledge, skills, or expectations, inhibiting his ability to cope. Job stress results from various interactions of the worker and the environment of the work they perform their duties. Location, gender, environment, and many other factors contribute to cause of stress. A combination of organizational change and stress management is useful in preventing stress at work and hence both the organizations and employees role in working out the strategies to overcome the occupational stress is crucial.

**Keywords:** Occupational stress; Workplace; Employee; Yoga; Mudras.

**Introduction**

Hard work among the People to meet their daily needs affect their physical and mental health resulting in reduction of their quality of life. Job stress was identified as emerging stressors which provokes for many physical and mental health consequences. It could be by overwhelming burdened of daily commitments or by a sense of social isolation; by feel sense of life's pointlessness or inundated for vague anxiety. Occupational stress is currently one of the most costly occupational health issues Cooper & Cart-wright (1994).

About one-third of all type workers reports high levels of stress due to personal reason and work environment. 20-30% of different sector workers reported that work-related stresses affect their physical and mental health.

**Occupational Stress<sup>1</sup>**

Occupational stress is defined as stress related to one's job Occupational stress results from unexpected job or other responsibilities and pressures in work environment that do not align with his knowledge, skills, expectations which inhibit his ability to cope with it. The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers occupational stress as one among the emerging health threat for employees which needs immediate attention.

World Health Organization (WHO) defines occupational stress as health problems with low motivation and low safety which has negative impacts on employees exposed to stress at work place and consequently, considerable unwanted costs for the employers.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) define occupational stress as "any harmful physical or mental response, occurring due to individual's incompatibility with his/her ability," which might lead to aggressive behaviors, occupational injuries, physical diseases and even to death

### Causes of Occupational Stress<sup>5</sup>

Job stress results from various interactions between the worker and their work environment. Causes of occupational stress includes:

1. *Working conditions:* Stressful working conditions.
2. *Workload:* Quantitative, Qualitative and under load of work load.
3. *Long hours:* Increased working hours more than 40 hours per week.
4. *Status:* Status or level of a person like less powerful employees suffers more stress than powerful employees.
5. *Economic factors:* Economic factors like Pressure from investors, lack of trade and professional unions and Inter-company rivalries leading to workplace stress
6. *Workplace bullying:* Due to unwanted threat to employee's professional status, personal status, isolation among workers, inter-company rivalries.
7. *Workplace conflict:* It includes interpersonal conflict and role conflict of employees at work environment.<sup>5</sup>
8. *Sexual harassment:* Direct & indirect Women Sexual harassment at work place
9. *Occupational group:* Lower occupational groups are at higher risk of work-related ill health than higher occupational groups.
10. *Toxic work Environment:* Due to the nature of production or manufacture.
11. Negative Workload
12. Isolation and difficult relationships with administrators and/or coworkers

### Effects of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress has negative effects on both organizations and for the employers. Occupational stress is the cause of 40% of turnover and 50%

of workplace absenteeism Stressful working conditions results in behavioral, physical & psychological effects.

- I. *Behavioral Effects:* Includes frequent absenteeism, poor decision making, accidents, organizational breakdown or even sabotage.
- II. *Physical Effects:* Includes fatigue, headache, stomach upset, Body pain, gain or loss of weight, chronic mild illness, sleep disturbances and development of several chronic health problems like cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders& etc.
- III. *Psychological Effects:* It include anxiety, irritability, alcoholism, feeling powerless and low morale.

### Prevention of Occupational Stress

A combination of organizational change and stress management is useful approach for preventing stress at work & work place. Some among preventive measures includes.

- Ensuring employees workload with their capabilities and resources.
- Designing jobs to provide opportunities to use their skills.
- Clearly defining workers' roles and responsibilities.
- Giving workers opportunities to participate in important work decisions
- Improving the communication skill in work environment.
- Provide more opportunities for social interaction among workers.
- Avoid workplace discrimination at work place.
- Introducing a participative leadership style to involve as many subordinates as possible to resolve stress-producing problems.
- Encourage work-life balance through frequent counselling.
- Encouraging the workers to follow relaxation techniques like Yoga therapy, meditation, listening music, etc.

### Yoga and Occupational Stress<sup>6,9</sup>

Yoga treat human indispositions as naturally as

possible, to alleviate pain and suffering through set of exercises, both physical and mental. Its primary aim is to restore simplicity and peace of mind free from confusion and distress. It gently rejuvenates the body. Few among the yoga to counteract against stress is

- **Pranayama** (like Naadisuthi and Bramari)



Fig. 1: Apana vayu mudra.

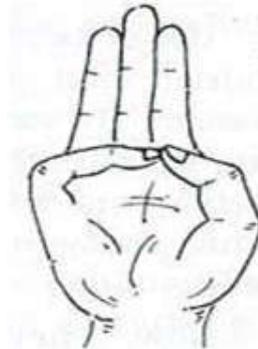


Fig. 2: Varuna mudra.



Fig. 3: Naadisuthi pranayama.



Fig. 4: Brahmani pranayama.

meditation to relieve stress is Mindfulness meditation, Chocolate meditation and 5-Minutes meditation.<sup>2-4</sup>

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**Ethical clearance:** Obtained

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