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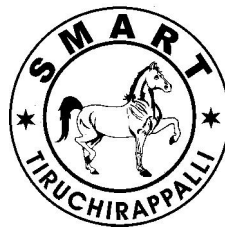
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# A STUDY ON STRESS FACED BY THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

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## **Abstract**

*The present study explores the stress experienced by the IT professionals at DSM Software, Trichy. Software professionals begin their career with great expectations. But the work environment, the demands of the job, coupled with erratic work hours and long commitments, make it difficult for these professionals to divide their work-life equation evenly, and hence they are pushed to a state of stress. Totally 50 respondents were chosen by applying Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Method. To measure the level of stress, functional role scale by A.K.Srivastava and A.Krishna was applied. It was inferred that more than half of the respondents (54%) experienced high level of stress. Suitable suggestions have also been made to reduce the stress among the IT professionals.*

## **Introduction**

Everyone encounters stress every day. Although many consider it as something negative, in fact stress itself is really neither good nor bad but neutral or nonspecific. Stress may be internal (from within ourselves) or external (such as noise from the environment) and does not always result from something unpleasant. A certain amount of stress in our lives is actually essential for being sufficiently stimulated to meet the challenges of everyday life. But when stress is constant and acute, it can have dangerous consequences. Since stress is both natural and unavoidable, it is necessary to understand it and to learn to deal with it, particularly how to reduce it.

The specific and immediate cause of stress is called the Stressor. A Stressor can be something dramatic or terrible, such as a violent experience or the death of a loved one, or it can be a positive and rewarding event like marriage or a promotion. The Stressor can be internal such as feelings of guilt or anger felt in a relationship or it can be external such as a natural disaster or the ordinary rigors and frustrations of commuting. It can also have a physical source like simple exercise or hard

work. Or it can be strictly mental, like worry. Our bodies react the same way physiologically no matter what the source and reasons for stress might be.

From a physical standpoint, the body reacts to stress in a standard and predictable manner. When stress occurs, the brain immediately receives nerve impulses. These impulses initiate an automatic sequence carried out by the body's Sympathetic Nervous System. It begins with stimulation of the brain's Hypothalamus which sends nerve impulses to both the Adrenal and the Pituitary Glands. Also called the "fight or flight" Response, this automatic physiological process is known to have evolved in humans to enable them to cope with sudden life-threatening emergencies. When faced with a major Stressor, the body's biochemistry instantly hurtles into a ready mode that marshals all the possible resources necessary to either escape or do battle. Thus the Adrenal Glands located on top of the Kidneys provide an instant surge of Adrenaline, the body's rocket fuel, quickening the heart rate and blood flow and providing every cell with extra oxygen. They also release Cortisol or Hydrocortisone, causing an increase in both Amino Acids (the building blocks of proteins) and Blood Sugar. These will be

needed if tissue repair must take place. Finally, the Pituitary Gland at the base of the brain releases a variety of hormones, endorphins among them, that act as natural painkillers and permit the body to do things it ordinarily cannot do. Thus at just about the same time a Stressor is recognized by the body, the heart and breathing rate accelerate, the pupils dilate to let in more light, perspiration increases and digestion slows, and the body is aroused, energized, and temporarily feels no pain. This sequence of events allows individuals to do whatever is required to save themselves, whether it is to flee from a predator or engage in combat and mount an attack.

While long-term stress can seriously affect one's quality of life and lead to major, sometimes fatal, disease, prolonged stress also results in the everyday miseries of headache and allergy, digestive disorders and fatigue, irritable bladder, insomnia, anxiety, depression, and simple aches and pains. Researchers exploring the connection between stress and susceptibility to cold, exposed stressed individuals (who had experienced a death in the family, become divorced, or had recently moved) to cold viruses. They discovered that they were likely to become infected. Managing stress involves learning about how stress affects the mind and body, how to identify the warning signs of stress, how to develop good stress management techniques and when to seek professional help.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been called "The Age of Stress". Today's man has to struggle hard to keep himself afloat against the drowning tides of stress. Every job has its own kind of giving stress to the individual. Stress among IT professionals is being focused as an important one now in this modern computerized world. Advancement in the field of computer increases the job opportunity for many young graduates. They are appointed in large numbers with attractive salary. But they are not provided with

sufficient leisure time and they ought to work under tight schedule. Thus they are forced to experience stress. It compounds their physical and psychological problem. Since there is a need to find out the real condition of IT professionals, this study was designed in such a way to throw some light on the stress faced by IT professionals.

### **Objectives**

- 1) To know the demographic characteristics of respondents.
- 2) To study the economic condition of respondents.
- 3) To identify the stress faced by respondents.

### **Sample Selection**

DSM Software (P) Ltd. was set up in June 1991 in Trichy with exclusive focus on Geoinformatics. Totally 50 respondents were chosen from different cadres for data collection by applying Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Method. Descriptive research design was used.

### **Tools of Data Collection and Statistical Tests Applied**

Functional Role Stress Scale was designed by A.K. Srivastava and A. Krishna. It is used to assess the extent of functional stresses related to job roles. The scale comprises of 25 statements. Its reliability was found to be 0.9321. Statistical 't' test was applied to analyse the data. This paper attempts to present the results of a research study carried out during 2007-2008 at DSM Software (P) Ltd., Trichy.

### **Results and Discussion**

The hypothesis was framed to know the impact of social factors like sex, marital status and family system on stress. Students t-distribution was applied to test the hypothesis. The **Table-1** reveals that sex, marital status and family system did not influence stress. Hence the null hypothesis, "Social Factors like

sex, marital status and family system did not influence stress” was accepted.

It is evident from **Table-2** that more than half of the respondents (54%) faced higher level of stress whereas less than half (46%) of the respondents faced low level of stress. Since more than half of the respondents suffered due to stress, social workers should be appointed in every IT Industry to deal with the psychosocial problem faced by the employees so as to reduce the stress and strain of employees. Programmes on Stress Management, Time Management, Mental Health, Personality Development, Physical Fitness etc should be organized for employees.

**Table - 3** depicts that all respondents (100%) suffered due to eye problem and a vast majority of respondents (92%) experienced body pain –pain at the neck, back and shoulders. More than half of the respondents faced problems like sleeplessness, blood pressure and gastrointestinal problems and one fifth of the respondents (20%) complained of diabetes. The study shows that all the respondents suffered eye problem. Hence periodical eye check up should be organized to prevent serious health problem. A vast majority of the respondents suffered due to body pain –that is pain near the neck, back, hip and shoulders. Hence seating accommodation may be modified through the arrangement of revolving cushion chairs instead of steel chairs. Since occupational hazards are numerous in this field, these employees should be provided with medical allowances. Periodical classes for yoga and meditation could be organized for acquiring stress-free life.

### **Major findings**

- ✓ More than half of the respondents (54%) were married.
- ✓ Majority of the respondents (54%) belonged to joint family system.

- ✓ More than half of the respondents (54%) experienced higher level of stress.

### **Suggestion for future research**

- A comparative study on stress faced by males and females in the IT field.
- Psycho Social Profile of the IT professionals.

### **Conclusion**

The global opportunity to serve in the IT field is tremendous but at the same time negative effects are highly alarming. It is better to have a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of stress. It should also be evaluated through necessary enumeration and investigation. It is strongly believed that the suggestion laid out in this Study may be a benefit not only to the employees but also to the employers. Employees are the largest investment. They are human beings and not machines. Their feelings cannot be ignored or argued about. Their psychosocial problems must be treated professionally. Management Intervention to help employees to solve their personal and official problems will boost their morale, resulting in a higher standard of service.

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**Table -1**  
**'t' test between the respondents' demographic characteristics and stress**

S. No	Variable	$\bar{X}$	S.D.	Statistical
1	Sex			t = 0.767
	Male	43.7667	7.0987	P > 0.05
	Female	45.3000	6.6499	Not Significant
2	Type of family			t = 0.174
	Nuclear	44.5652	7.7742	P > 0.05
	Joint	44.2222	6.1976	Not Significant
3	Marital Status			t = 0.174
	Married	44.2222	7.3293	P > 0.05
	Unmarried	44.5652	6.5075	Not Significant

**Table - 2**  
**Level of stress experienced by the respondents**

S. No	Level of stress	No. of respondents (n:50)	Percentage
1	Low	23	46
2	High	27	54

**Table - 3**  
**Physical problem experienced by the respondents**

S. No	Physical problem	No. of respondents (n:50)	Percentage
1	Sleeplessness	31	62
2	Blood Pressure	26	52
3	Diabetes	10	20
4	Body pain	46	92
5	Eye problem	50	100
6	Gastrointestinal	32	64