



## Occupational Stress among Employees in Context of Nature of Organization and Designation

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was carried out on employees [100, Public organization; 50 Officers; 50 Clerks; 100, Private organization: 50 Officers; 50 Clerks]. The objectives were to make a comparison between employees of public Vs private sectors; officers of public Vs officers of private sectors; clerks of public Vs clerks of private sectors, officers of public Vs clerks of private; clerks of public Vs officers of private sectors] on the measure of occupational stress. It was hypothesized that (i) there will be significant difference between employees of public and private sectors in terms of their occupational stress. (ii) there would be significant difference between officer employees of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress. (iii) there would be significant difference of occupational stress between clerk employees of public and private sectors in terms of their occupational stress. (iv) there would be significant difference between officers / executives of public sectors and clerks of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress. (v) There would be significant difference between clerk group of public sectors and officer/ executives of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress. For the purpose, the respondents were administered ORS Scale by Pareek, Srivastava and Singh along with PDS and data were obtained. The obtained data were treated using to-test. The results supported the hypotheses. It was found that nature of organization and designation both are significantly contributors to occupational stress. The employees of private sectors are comparatively more prone to occupational stress. Thus, it was concluded that occupational stress amongst

*employees is the function of their nature of organization and designation.*

## **KEY WORDS**

*Occupation, Stress, Employee, Organization.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Occupational stress is a significant concern in modern workplaces, particularly among women employees who often face unique stressors compared to their male counterparts. The nature of the organization—whether it is corporate, Government, small business, or non-profit plays a crucial role in shaping the work environment, expectations, and stress levels of female employees. The organizational structure, culture, job demands, work-life balance, and gender dynamics all contribute to the intensity of occupational stress experienced by women.

Women in the workforce often navigate a dual burden balancing professional responsibilities with domestic and societal expectations. The stressors they encounter may vary depending on the type of organization they work for. For instance, women in high-pressure corporate settings may experience stress due to long working hours, performance targets, and workplace competition. In contrast, those in non-profit or Government organizations might face challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, job insecurity, and lower wages.

This introduction aims to explore occupational stress among women employees within the context of different organizational settings. It will examine the factors contributing to stress, the impact of workplace structures, and potential solutions for mitigating stress-related issues.

Occupational stress refers to the mental and physical strain caused by workplace conditions, expectations, and responsibilities. It arises when the demands of a job exceed an employee's ability to cope, leading to adverse health and performance outcomes. Stress can be caused by excessive workload, job insecurity, workplace discrimination, lack of career growth opportunities, and poor management practices.

For women, occupational stress is often compounded by additional social and personal pressures. They may face gender biases, unequal pay, lack of mentorship opportunities, or even workplace harassment. Moreover, the societal expectation that women should take primary responsibility for household duties adds another layer of psychological burden.

The nature of an organization significantly impacts workplace culture, job roles, employee interactions, and stress levels. Different types of organizations corporate, Government, small enterprises, and non-profits—offer varied work environments that shape the occupational experiences of women.

Corporate settings are known for their fast-paced environments, high expectations, and competitive nature. Women in these workplaces often face challenges such as: (i) Long Working Hours: The demand to meet tight deadlines and performance targets often leads to extended working hours, leaving little time for personal life. (ii) Workplace Discrimination: Gender biases in promotions, salary gaps, and limited leadership opportunities can increase stress levels. (iii) Work-Life Imbalance: Many corporate jobs require extensive travel and availability beyond regular work hours, making it difficult for women to balance personal responsibilities and (iv) Glass Ceiling Effect: Women often face barriers to reaching top executive positions due to gender stereotypes and biased workplace cultures. While corporate organizations offer financial stability and career growth opportunities, they also pose significant stress-related risks for women employees.

Government jobs are generally perceived as more stable and structured, yet they come with their own set of stressors. Women in Government organizations may experience: (i) Bureaucratic Challenges: Strict regulations, lengthy approval processes, and rigid hierarchies can create frustration. (ii) Job Security vs. Growth Limitations: While Government jobs provide stability, they may not offer as many opportunities for rapid career advancement. (iii) Gender Bias in Leadership: Despite policies promoting gender equality, leadership

roles in many Government institutions remain male-dominated and (iv) Workplace Politics: Navigating office politics in bureaucratic environments can be stressful and mentally exhausting.

Although Government jobs provide benefits like fixed working hours and maternity leave policies, workplace dynamics and slow career progression can contribute to occupational stress.

Women working in small businesses and startups often experience a mix of flexibility and unpredictability. Key stressors in these organizations include: (i) Job Insecurity: Startups and small businesses may face financial instability, leading to layoffs and uncertain career paths. (ii) Multitasking Pressure: Employees in smaller firms often take on multiple roles, increasing workload and stress. (iii) Lack of Formal HR Policies: Smaller firms may not have structured policies regarding maternity leave, harassment prevention, or employee wellness, leaving women vulnerable to workplace challenges and (iv) Workplace Informality: While informality can foster a friendly work environment, it can also blur professional boundaries, making it difficult for women to assert their rights. Despite these challenges, small businesses and startups can offer women more flexibility in working arrangements, which may help mitigate stress in some cases.

Women in non-profits often work towards social causes, which can be fulfilling but also stressful due to: (i) Emotional Exhaustion: Dealing with social issues, underprivileged communities, or crisis situations can lead to compassion fatigue. (ii) Limited Financial Resources: Budget constraints in non-profits can lead to lower salaries, limited benefits, and understaffing, increasing employee workload. (iii) Lack of Career Progression: Women in non-profits may find fewer opportunities for promotions and salary increases compared to corporate jobs. (iv) Emotional vs. Professional Boundaries: Engaging in humanitarian or advocacy work can blur the lines between personal and professional life, making it harder for women to disconnect from work stress.

The effects of occupational stress among women are profound, impacting both mental and physical health. Some common consequences include: (i) Mental Health Issues: Anxiety, depression, and burnout are common among women experiencing high workplace stress. (ii) Physical Health Problems: Stress can lead to migraines, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and sleep disorders. (iii) Reduced Productivity: Women under constant stress may struggle to concentrate, leading to decreased efficiency and job performance. (iv) Workplace Attrition: Many women leave their jobs due to overwhelming stress, lack of work-life balance, or hostile work environments.

Organizations and policymakers must take proactive steps to reduce occupational stress for women. Effective strategies include: (i) Flexible Work Policies: Allowing remote work, flexible hours, and parental leave can help women manage work and personal responsibilities effectively. (ii) Equal Opportunity Policies: Ensuring fair pay, promotions, and leadership opportunities can reduce stress related to workplace discrimination. (iii) Employee Wellness Programs: Mental health support, counseling services, and stress management workshops can create a healthier work environment. (iv) Supportive Leadership: Encouraging inclusive leadership and mentorship programs can help women navigate workplace challenges and (v) Creating Safe Workplaces: Implementing strict anti-harassment policies and grievance mechanisms can foster a stress-free workplace for women.

Occupational stress among women employees varies across different types of organizations, influenced by factors such as workplace culture, job demands, gender biases, and career growth opportunities. While corporate settings offer financial benefits but high stress, Government jobs provide stability but slow career progression. Small businesses offer flexibility but may lack formal policies, while non-profits provide meaningful work but face resource limitations.

Understanding the role of organizational nature in occupational stress is essential for developing effective solutions. By implementing flexible policies, promoting gender equality, and fostering supportive work environments, organizations can help women manage stress and thrive in their careers. Addressing occupational

stress among women is not only beneficial for employees but also contributes to overall workplace productivity and well-being.

## Review of Literature

Lazarus & Folkman<sup>7</sup> (1984) defined stress as an interaction between individuals and their environment. It emphasizes that workplace stress is influenced by an individual's appraisal of job demands and their coping mechanisms. The nature of the organization plays a crucial role in shaping the stress response of women employees, as organizational structure determines the level of autonomy, workload, and support available. Kanter<sup>6</sup> (1977) highlighted how organizational structures and hierarchies contribute to workplace stress among women. She discusses the "tokenism" effect, where women in male-dominated organizations experience increased stress due to higher visibility, performance pressure, and exclusion from informal networks. Nelson & Burke<sup>8</sup> (2000) explored occupational stress among women in executive positions in corporate organizations. It finds that women in high-ranking roles face stress due to long working hours, work-life conflict, and workplace discrimination. The competitive nature of corporate environments often leads to burnout, affecting both mental and physical health. Sundaresan<sup>10</sup> (2013) investigated the work-life balance issues that contribute to stress among women in different types of organizations. It highlights that women in corporate and startup environments face greater difficulty in balancing work and personal life due to long hours and high expectations, whereas women in Government organizations benefit from structured work schedules but face bureaucratic stress. Cooper & Marshall<sup>3</sup> (1976) examined occupational stress across different industries and finds that stress levels are higher in hierarchical organizations with rigid structures. Women, in particular, face additional stress due to gender-based biases, limited promotional opportunities, and the challenge of proving competence in male-dominated sectors. Blau et al.<sup>2</sup> (2002) - Job Stress, Work-Life Conflict, and Job Satisfaction. The study explores how organizational policies impact occupational stress among women. It finds that organizations with flexible work arrangements and supportive management structures report lower stress levels among female employees. Conversely, women in rigid, high-pressure environments experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction and mental health issues. Schaufeli & Bakker<sup>9</sup> (2004) emphasized that job demands (e.g., workload, deadlines, emotional labor) and job resources (e.g., autonomy, social support, leadership) determine workplace stress levels. Women working in resource-limited environments, such as non-profits or small businesses, often experience stress due to excessive workloads and limited career progression opportunities. Davidson & Cooper<sup>4</sup> (1992) focused on occupational stress experienced by women in leadership positions across different organizational settings. It finds that stressors such as workplace discrimination, lack of mentoring, and difficulty breaking the "glass ceiling" are more pronounced in corporate and Government organizations compared to startups and small enterprises. Gutek, Searle, & Klepa<sup>5</sup> (1991) discussed how the nature of an organization influences work-family conflict, a major source of stress for women employees. Women in traditional, male-dominated industries face higher stress levels due to inflexible work schedules, while those in more progressive, inclusive organizations experience better work-life integration. Bambra et al.<sup>1</sup> (2009) examined how different organizational structures impact the stress and health outcomes of women employees. It concludes that women in Government jobs experience lower occupational stress due to stable work environments, while those in high-pressure corporate roles face increased risks of stress-related illnesses like anxiety and hypertension.

Employees of public and private organizations have not been studied in context of Bihar. This justifies undertaking of the problem or study.

## Objective

To compare the difference in occupational stress between groups of employees of:

(i) Public Vs Private Sectors, (ii) Officers of Public Vs Private Sectors, (iii) Clerks of Public Vs Private Sectors, (iv) Officers of Public Sectors Vs Clerks of Private Sectors and (v) Clerks of Public Sectors Vs Officers of Private Sectors.

## Hypothesis

- H<sub>1</sub>** There will be significant difference between employees of public and private sectors in terms of their occupational stress.
- H<sub>2</sub>** There would be significant difference between officer employees of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress.
- H<sub>3</sub>** There would be significant difference of occupational stress between clerk employees of public and private sectors.
- H<sub>4</sub>** There would be significant difference between officers / executives of public sectors and clerks of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress.
- H<sub>5</sub>** There would be significant difference between clerk group of public sectors and officer / executives of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress.

## Method of Study

### Sample Used

The sample comprised of 100 employees of public sectors [Officers : 50; Clerks : 50] and 100 from private sectors [Officers : 50; Clerks : 50] based on incidental-cum-purposive sampling technique. Other than the research condition, the sample was matched.

### Research Design Used

Between group design was used.

### Tools Used

- (i) PDS was used to seek the basic information about the respondents.
- (ii) Occupational Role Stress Scale by Pareek, Srivastava and Singh was used to measure occupational stress amongst employees.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 01:** Showing a comparison between employees of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress

Women Employees	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p
Public Sector	100	52.29	5.46	10.85	198	<.01
Private Sector	100	60.75	5.64			

It is clear from the result table-01 that employees of public sectors (N = 100) are more involved towards their job as compared to the employees of private sectors (N = 100). The mean score on the measure occupational stress for employees of public sector (Mean=52.29) is significantly higher than the mean score of the employees of private sector (Mean=60.75). The t-value was found significant (t = 10.85; df = 198; p<.01). Employees of the private sector often face higher occupational stress due to demanding work environments, performance-based job security, strict deadlines, long hours, and frequent evaluations. Unlike public sector jobs, which typically offer greater job stability, structured schedules, and less pressure for profit or performance, private jobs can be more intense and competitive.

**Table 02:** Showing a comparison between employees of officer grade of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress

Women Officer Employees	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p
Public Sector	50	46.75	3.40	10.70	98	<.01
Private Sector	50	54.24	3.58			

The results displayed table-02 clearly revealed that mean value of officer executives of public sector (Mean=46.75) is higher than the mean value of officer executives of private sector (Mean=54.24) on the measure of occupational stress. The t-value was found significant ( $t = 10.70$ ;  $df = 98$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Officers in the private sector experience higher occupational stress due to intense performance expectations, profit-driven goals, longer work hours, and limited job security. They often face constant pressure to meet targets and adapt to rapid changes. In contrast, public sector officers enjoy greater job stability, structured workloads, and less performance-linked stress.

**Table 03:** Showing significance of difference between the means of women employees of clerk grades of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress

Women Clerk Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p
Public Sector	50	45.74	3.65	8.20	98	<.01
Private Sector	50	51.48	3.33			

It is clear from the results table-03 that there is a significant difference between employees of public and private sectors on the measure of occupational stress. The clerks of public sectors (Mean=45.74) excelled over clerks of private sectors (Mean=51.48) in terms of occupational stress. The t-value was found significant ( $t = 8.20$ ;  $df = 98$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Clerks in the private sector experience higher occupational stress due to heavier workloads, stricter supervision, lower job security, and pressure to meet efficiency targets. They often lack the benefits and protections available in the public sector, where clerks typically enjoy fixed hours, stable employment, and less performance-related pressure.

**Table 04:** Showing a comparison between officers / executives of public sectors and clerks of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress

Employees	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p
Officer / Executive of Pub. Sectors	50	48.19	3.17	7.95	98	<.01
Clerks of Private Sectors	50	53.44	3.45			

The results displayed in results table-04 clearly revealed the fact that mean value of officer / executives of public sector (Mean=48.19) is comparatively higher than the mean value of clerks of private sectors (Mean=53.44) on the measure of occupational stress. The t-value was found significant ( $t = 7.95$ ;  $df = 98$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Clerks in the private sector are more prone to high occupational stress than officers in the public sector due to lower job security, monotonous but demanding tasks, longer hours, limited autonomy, and fewer benefits. In contrast, public sector officers typically enjoy higher status, better job security, structured roles and administrative support.

**Table 05:** Showing a comparison between employee clerk group of public sectors and women officers of private sectors on the measure of occupational stress

Women Respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-value	df	p
Clerks of Pub. Sectors	50	47.24	3.84	10.68	98	<.01
Officers of Private Sectors	50	55.47	3.40			

The results displayed by results table-05 clearly revealed the fact that mean value of officer employees group of private sector possessed comparatively higher mean (Mean=55.47) on the measure of occupational stress. Than clerks of public sector (Mean 47.24). The t-value was found significant ( $t = 10.68$ ;  $df = 98$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Thus, hypothesis no. (05) was retained. Officers in the private sector face higher occupational stress than public sector clerks due to greater responsibilities, intense performance pressures, long working hours, and job insecurity. They are expected to meet ambitious targets and adapt to fast-paced environments. In contrast, public sector clerks have routine tasks, fixed hours, and job stability.

## CONCLUSIONS

- (i) Employees of public sector are more prone to occupational stress than employees of private sector. Thus, occupational stress is the function of nature of job.
- (ii) Officer employees of private sector are more prone to occupational stress than officer employees of public sector.
- (iii) Clerk employees of private sector experience higher occupational stress as compared to clerk employees of public sector.
- (iv) Clerk employees of private sector experience higher degree of occupational stress as compared to officer or executives of public sectors.
- (v) Officer of private sector experience higher degree of occupational stress as compared to clerk of private sector.

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