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## **JOB STRESS: INFLUENCE OF SOCIO ECONOMICAL FACTORS ON EMPLOYEES OF INDIAN ARMY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

No human being is exempted from stress. Stress causes a number of biological, psychological and behavioural changes. The soldiers are no exception to stress and they are comparatively in an ideal stress breeding environment due to frequent and large number of uncertainties when compared with civilian counterparts in similar service conditions. Therefore, the present study is aimed to examine the extent of stress experience among Indian army soldiers with reference to varied socioeconomic groups of age, designation, experience, income and region. The study was conducted on 417 soldiers by using Thomas Holmes (1981) measure to find out the level of job stress in the area of organisational stressors, job stressors, group stressors and individual stressors and the same was used to find out overall stress of the respondents. This scale consists of 42 items with 3 point ratings. It is observed from the results that up to an age of 40 years soldiers are experiencing more stress with reference to organisational group and individual dimension of stress. With regards to designation, JCO designated soldiers have felt stress working on too many jobs and individuals felt that they are spending less time with family members. The soldiers felt that they are working too hard, depressed by working environment because they bore 5 dependents. work appears as tough and South Indian Army soldiers experienced group related stress when compared to south Indian army soldiers on region

**Key words:** Job stress, Indian Army, Soldiers and employees

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### **Introduction:**

People express stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on perception of an event or situation. Stress, is the way we react physically and mentally to changes, events and situations as both positively and negatively affect our perception. If we view a situation negatively it leads us to feel distressed, overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form is Eustress, view of results from a positive view, which is also called “good stress”. Although stress is a biological term, it is commonly used in a metaphorical sense. Stress is our body’s response to change. The body reacts to it by releasing adrenaline (a hormone) that causes your breathing and heart beat rate to speed up, and your blood pressure to rise. It has also come to be accepted as a euphemism for describing difficulties faced by an individual.

In present scenario job stress has become a vital concern in the field of Human Resource Management. Apart from the stressors outside the organization such as family burdens, individual stressors and personal life satisfaction are different dimensions that are affecting a military personal. Occupational stressors are various job-related stressors which negatively influence the performance and wellbeing of the employees (Kang, 2005). They exist in every organisation, though their degree may vary from occupation and individual (Gignac & Appelbaum, 1997). Some stressors are common to all occupations whereas some are unique to a specific occupation, thus specific stressors must be explored to manage stress in any occupation (Kang, 2005). Stress within manageable limits is not only desirable but essential. It acts as an engine that drives humans to excel. (Maj Gen Mrinal Suman, 2009 & 2014).

Military personnel are often forced to perform under uniquely stressful conditions; stress exists for service members not only in holistic situations but also in peace missions and through the demands of their daily jobs. These types of stressors can take a significant toll on the performance, functioning and effectiveness of military personal. Stress can have an effect on service personnel and their ability to successfully complete their missions. It appears important to understand more thoroughly how job stress affects military personnel.

### **REVIEW LITERATURE:**

Bartone et al (1998) studied military stressors faced by soldiers during peacekeeping mission such as isolation, ambiguity, powerlessness, boredom, and danger/ threat. Active duty military personnel were found to have poor mental and physical health compared to veterans and reserve personnel in a study conducted by Boehmer et al. (2003). Stress among soldiers are found to be due to change of event/ routine that happens. These factors do not cause stress in a mathematical measure. It could be because of the personality traits of an individual that make him react to stressors. The operational environment has been covered with relation to faces of job satisfaction, living conditions including recreation facilities, service conditions including pay and allowances, food, leave, promotion, posting and tenures in operational high altitude/ difficult areas (Dixit, 2011). It is argued that increase in occupationalism, is due to the decline in the status of the military profession in society coupled with organizational change. This paper attempts to examine whether there is decline in the commitment to many of these normative aspects of military service, particularly know the influence of various socio economic groups of Non Commissioned Officers (NCO's) and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO's).

**Method:**

The main objective of the present study is to examine the effect of socio demographical variables on job stress among the soldiers of Indian Army.

**Hypothesis**

- ❖ There will be a significant influence of age groups of Indian Army soldiers on job stress.
- ❖ There will be a significant influence of designations of Indian Army soldiers on job stress.
- ❖ There will be a significant influence of No. of Family members of Indian Army soldiers on job stress.
- ❖ There will be a significant influence of income of Indian Army soldiers on job stress.
- ❖ There will be a significant influence of region of Indian Army soldiers on job stress.

**Sample:**

The study was conducted on a random sample drawn from the soldiers of Indian army. The sample consists of 417 soldiers in different levels with an average age 40 yrs. no of family member and 19 yrs of experience, no of dependents and region of army soldiers.

**Personal factors:**

The data were analyzed by computing the significant difference in mean scores on the dimensions of job stressors among the soldiers of different age, designation, experience, income and region groups. The sample of the Indian army soldiers are categorized into different sub groups. The three groups categorized on the basis of age are up to 40 years and above 40 years. The designations are grouped into junior commission officer (JCO), Havildar (HAV) and Naik (NK) & Sepoy (SEP). With regard to No of family member they are grouped into up to 5 members and above 5 members. The whole sample is differentiated in to two regions such as north and south Indian soldiers respectively.

**Measure/tools:**

The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Thomas Holmes (1981). This tool is used to find out the level of job stress in the area of organisational stressors, job stressors, group stressors and individual stressors and the same was used to find out overall stress of the respondents. This scale contains 42 items with 3 point rating scale. The reliability and validity was also established. The reliability of the tool is 0.878. Data analysis was carried out by using the statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data and find the mean values. T-test and One Way Analyses Of Variance (ANOVA) were used to examine the significant mean differences.

**Results and discussion:**

The results indicate significant of difference in the dimensions of job stress among Indian army soldiers. The socio economic variables of age, designations, salary, no. of family member and region are grouped to examine the job stress among army soldiers.

**Table- 1 Age and Job Stress**

Domains	AGE	N	Mean	SD	t- value
<b>Organizational Stressors</b>	Below 40	268	24.19	3.74	3.20**
	Above 40	149	25.46	4.08	
<b>Job Stressors</b>	Below 40	268	27.70	4.65	3.10**
	Above 40	150	29.10	3.96	
<b>Group Stressors</b>	Below 40	268	16.61	2.75	0.68
	Above 40	150	16.80	2.55	
<b>Individual stressors</b>	Below 40	268	14.64	2.15	3.25**
	Above 40	150	15.35	2.12	

Note: \*p≤.05 level; \*\*p≤.01 level

**Age:**

Table-1 shows the significant mean differences between up to 40 years and above 40 years age group on job stress domains. It is observed that above the age of 40 years soldiers are significantly influenced by organisational stressors (t= 3.20, p≤.01), job stressors (t= 3.10, p≤.01) and individual stressors (t= 3.25, p≤.01). It indicates that soldiers are feeling that job is too difficult, creating more tension at organisational level. and also because of lack of individuality in decision making, lack of awareness on specific task. With regard to job stressor, it was observed that soldiers have a feeling of working too hard, depressed by working environment, sometimes feeling job is boring and involved with unnecessary job activities. Considering individual stressors, it is noticed that soldiers do not have time to spend with family members which is cause for conflicts with family members. The other factors could be due to personality traits, typical working environment, compulsions and restrictions imposed on soldiers during their service period.

**Table-2 Designation and Job Stress**

Domains	Designation	N	Mean	SD	f- value
<b>Organizational Stressors</b>	JCO	64	26.81	4.67	12.40**
	HAV	228	24.36	3.65	
	NK & SEP	125	24.08	3.60	
<b>Job Stressors</b>	JCO	65	29.77	3.74	4.77*
	HAV	228	27.93	3.76	
	NK & SEP	125	27.92	5.70	
<b>Group Stressors</b>	JCO	65	17.03	2.43	1.09
	HAV	228	16.52	2.69	
	NK & SEP	125	16.81	2.80	
<b>Individual stressors</b>	JCO	65	15.92	2.15	8.98**
	HAV	228	14.68	2.09	
	NK & SEP	125	14.75	2.19	

Note: \*p≤.05 level; \*\*p≤.01 level

**Designation:**

Table- 2 depicts the significant mean differences among the designations of JCO, HAV and NK & SEP on job stress scale. It was found that JCO level designated soldiers significantly have more score on organisational stressors (t= 12.40, p≤.01), job stressors (t= 4.77, p≤.01) and Individual

stressor ( $t= 8.98, p \leq .01$ ) when compared to HAV and NK & SEP level soldiers. It seems that JCO level soldiers have a feeling of very poor organisational channel and carrying out too many responsibilities. One of the causes could be limited leave policies in organisational level (DIPR, December 2006). With regard to job stressor, soldiers felt that they are working on many job activities and that to too hard. It is noticed from individual stressors, JCO level soldiers are suffering chronic illness and few of them have a feeling that they do not have sufficient time to spend with family members. In addition, each individual's attitude, personality, perception towards job and job satisfaction also affect job stress. Previous studies such as (Dixit, 2011) documented that middle rank officers as compared to soldiers and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) were found to be more vulnerable and stressed out.

**Table- 3 No of family member and job stress**

Domains	No. of dependent member	N	Mean	SD	t- value
<b>Organizational Stressors</b>	Below 5	229	24.85	3.74	1.14
	Above 5	188	24.41	4.11	
<b>Job Stressors</b>	Below 5	230	28.20	3.84	0.05
	Above 5	188	28.22	5.14	
<b>Group Stressors</b>	Below 5	230	16.84	2.67	1.32
	Above 5	188	16.49	2.70	
<b>Individual Stressors</b>	Below 5	230	15.13	2.22	2.45*
	Above 5	188	14.61	2.08	

Note: \* $p \leq .05$  level

**No of dependents:**

Table-3 provides significant mean differences on no. of dependents (5 and above 5) on job stress dimensions. Result have shown that up to 5 members in the family got more significant score on individual stressors ( $t= 2.45, p \leq .05$ ) domain above 5 dependents in the family group. It indicates that below 5 members in the family group soldiers felt working too hard, depressed by working environment, work appears as tough. Most of the soldiers Inability to be with parents and family in times of domestic emergencies weigh heavily on the minds of many soldiers. They do understand problems relating to exigencies of military service and distance from home, but tend to suffer from guilt complex. They feel that they have failed their parents of family. Earlier joint family systems took care of many such exigencies. Earlier studies documented that battle fatigue, unseen threats, extended filed tenures, absence of adequate recreational avenues and domestic disputes, inability to ensure the quality education to children and inability to meet aspiration of spouse and children caused for individual's stressors (Dixit, 2011).

**Table- 4 Income and job stress**

Domains	Income	N	Mean	SD	t- values
<b>Organisational Stressors</b>	Below 37000	266	24.43	3.82	1.54
	Above 37000	151	25.04	4.06	
<b>Job stressors</b>	Below 37000	266	28.09	4.89	0.73
	Above 37000	152	28.42	3.62	
<b>Group stressors</b>	Below 37000	266	16.77	2.69	0.88
	Above 37000	152	16.53	2.67	
<b>Individual stressors</b>	Below 37000	266	15.58	2.08	3.99**
	Above 37000	152	14.45	2.21	

Note: \*\*p≤.01 level

**Income:**

Table-4 provides the significant mean differences in between below Rs. 37,000 and above Rs. 37,000 income per month on job stress dimensions. Results have shown that below Rs. 37,000 per month soldiers significantly differed on individual stressors (t= 3.99, p≤.01) domain when compare to above Rs. 37,000 per month income soldiers. In human perception income is one of the most influencing and dominating factors which is caused for success or failure in life. Previous studies also noticed that prolonged deployment in counter-insurgency operations in J&K and northeast also takes a toll on the physical endurance and mental health of soldiers; it's compounded by poor salaries, lack of basic amenities, ineffectual leadership and sometimes humiliation at the hands of their officers. (Dixit, 2011).

**Table- 5 Region and Job stress**

Domains	State	N	Mean	SD	t- value
<b>Organisational Stressors</b>	North	288	24.57	4.01	0.60
	South	129	24.82	3.69	
<b>Job Stressors</b>	North	289	27.82	3.77	2.70*
	South	129	29.09	5.65	
<b>Group Stressors</b>	North	289	16.54	2.67	1.72
	South	129	17.02	2.71	
<b>Individual Stressors</b>	North	289	14.90	2.18	0.08
	South	129	14.88	2.16	

Note: \*p≤.05 level;

**Region**

Above table- 5 shows the significant mean differences between north and south region of India army soldiers on job stress scale. Results have shown that south Indian soldiers significantly got more score on job stressor (t= 2.70, p≤.05) when compared with south Indian army soldiers. Basically, south Indian people have less participation in Indian armies, less support and inspiration from families, problem in language, adjustment. The other aspect is Interpersonal relationships among soldiers that is causing stress.



### **Summary and Conclusion**

The study was conducted on a sample of 417 soldiers of Indian army organizations, to examine job stress among socio economic variables. The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Thomas Holmes (1981) to examine the job stress in the area of organisational stressors, job stressors, group stressors and individual stressors and the same was used to find out overall stress of the respondents. This scale consists of 42 items with 3 point ratings. The major findings are given below.

- It is observed that above 40 years' soldiers are experiencing more stress in organisational, group and individual stress than below 40 years age group of Indian army soldiers.
- With regard to designation, JCO designated soldiers have feeling of working on too many jobs and Individuals felt that spending less time with family members
- Below 5 members in the family group soldiers felt working too hard, depressed by working environment, work appears as tough.
- South Indian Army soldiers experienced group stress when compared with south Indian army soldiers.

These findings suggest that the less age group, low designated, less dependent and southern Army soldiers have been experiencing distress. Hence, the implications of the study reveals that A soldier whose professional, social, financial and domestic needs are met adequately, remains motivated to give his ultimate to the nation and stress intensity in such a soldier remains within the optimum limits depending upon his personality traits. Improved psychiatric help and better manpower coordination brought down the number. The appropriate improvements in the existing system are the need of hour to ensure better interaction among soldiers at various levels. The soldiers have to be encouraged to share their problems with their seniors and peer group

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