

# Occupational Stress and Women Nurses – A Study on Corporate Hospitals in Kerala

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**Abstract:** - Life is nothing but a package of survival dispositions. Stress is something which make one feel sore. It creates unevenness and individual makes an effort to restore the state of steadiness. To do things faster and better with fewer people is the goal of many companies today. These lead to put too much pressure on employees. Stress is the flavor of life, without which life may get abridged to a mere vegetative existence. But stress, burnout, turnover, aggression and other unpleasant side effects can also occur. Stress may not be a threat to normal functioning but also be an opportunity for growth.

**Key Words:** Stress, State of Steadiness, Work Pressure, Aggression and Opportunity for Growth.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is an unavoidable part in today's contemporary life. The industrialisation, globalization, workplace compression, progression in population and day to day life pressure create more anxiety and tension in individuals. As the result of these, individual and organization has gone through drastic changes over the years and is still going on. Stress is something which make one feel sore. It creates unevenness and individual makes an effort to restore the state of steadiness. Organizations and the people who run them are under constant pressure to increase income and reduce cost of production. To do things faster and better with fewer people is the goal of many companies today. These lead to put too much pressure on employees. The result of these pressures turns to increased performance, higher profits and faster growth. But stress, burnout, turnover, aggression and other unpleasant side effects can also occur.

Nurses form the backbone of any medical services or patient care in the health sector. But in India, they are highly exploited, with a lack of respect and dignity at workplaces and more importantly paid extremely low salaries. It is in this context that nurses across the country should unite and confront the hospital management and the government on these issues.

Stress could be confronted at every stage in life. Stress is the flavor of life, without which life may get abridged to a mere vegetative existence. Even normal development and development of normal personality is not possible without stress. Stress may not be a threat to normal functioning but also be an opportunity for growth. Every individual has his own stress point. There are individual

variations in reacting to stress, which depend upon early experience of stress.

High levels of education especially among women and greater health consciousness have played a key role in the attainment of good health standards in Kerala. Hence, the mushrooming of private and corporate hospitals that offer high quality services matching international standards, healthcare in Kerala is growing by leaps and bounds. Since the work pressure in this field is very high compared to other sectors. Employees in the health care sector forced to working around the clock, also need a shift rotation, extended work schedule and prolonged contact with irritable and depressed patients leads to stress among nurses.

## II. CONCEPT OF STRESS

Life is nothing but a package of survival dispositions. The instinct to survive is the basic character of all living beings, which exerted by an internal force. This internal force is called stress. The concept of stress is as old as human civilization.

The word "stress" is derived from the Latin term 'stringers' which means to "to draw tight". Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension, anxiety frustration or agitation. Thus, stress is a mental, emotional or physical reaction resulting from an individual's response to environmental pressure.

Stress is of two types: 1. **Positive or Eustress:** It is the term used to describe positive stress. This refers to the healthy, positive, constructive result of stress. This stress activities and motivates people to achieve their goals and become successful in their life. In other words eustress or positive stress is highly essential for human being to survive. 2. **Negative or Distress:** Negative side of stress is called distress. This refers the adverse effect to employees' mental and physical health as well as in their work. In other words distress or negative stress is highly harmful for the individuals and for the corporate as well. Distress possesses a negative force which is otherwise known as destructive stress.

## III. HOSPITAL INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

In service sector, mainly hospital industry the occupational stress is an inevitable part and also it is very high

in nursing compared to other profession in health care industry because nursing service need round the clock service with more concentration and patience .As nurse are constantly exposed to human sufferings they also faces the same problem throughout the working life. There are many factors which affect stress in nurses, job factors, organizational factor, relationship factor, family related factors, working environmental factors all these factors together constitute stress in nurses.

The occupational stress and its cause and management strategy vary among women nurses based on their age, marital status, educational qualification, nature of family, experience, family support and working condition. In order to understand these aspects, the women nurses (Head Nurse and Staff Nurse) working in corporate sector hospitals in Kerala are taken for the study.

#### IV. ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG WOMEN NURSES

A total of 5 corporate hospitals with 100 beds and above are selected from Trivandrum District for the study. Analysis were made on the opinion of an aggregate of 50 samples, 5 head nurse and 5 staff nurse each from each hospital, selected conveniently.

The analysis is made in two parts. Part-A- Analysis of Personal Details and Part-B- Analysis of Opinion on Stress.

##### *Part-A- Analysis of Personal Details*

##### *1. Age*

The age wise classification of respondents is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Sl No	Age	Staff Nurse		Head Nurse		Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Up to 25 Years	3	12	0	0	3	6
2	26 - 30 Years	12	48	1	4	13	26
3	31 - 35 Years	8	32	11	44	19	38
4	Above 35 Years	2	8	13	52	15	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

Age group of the respondents in the sample revealed that majority of the respondents, i.e., 19 respondents is in the age group of 31 to 35 years (38 per cent). Majority of the Staff Nurse respondents, i.e., 12 respondents is in the age group of 26 to 30 years (48 per cent). Majority of the Head Nurse

respondents, i.e., 13 respondents is Above 35 years age group of (52 per cent).

##### *2. Educational Qualifications*

The educational qualification wise classification of respondents is depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

Sl No	Educational Qualification	Staff Nurse		Head Nurse		Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	BSc	15	60	9	36	24	48
2	General	10	40	16	64	26	52
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

Out of the entire sample of 50 respondents surveyed, 24 respondents (48 per cent) have BSc Nursing degree and a slight majority of 26 (52 per cent) have General academic

qualifications.

##### *3. Marital Status*

Table 3

Sl No	Marital Status	Staff Nurse		Head Nurse		Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Single	3	12	2	8	5	10
2	Married	21	84	19	76	40	80

3	Widowed/Divorced	1	4	4	16	5	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

Marital Status of the respondents in the sample revealed that majority of the respondents, i.e., 40 respondents is married (80 per cent). Only 10 respondents (20 per cent) of

the total respondents are single and widowed/ divorced (5 respondents each).

#### 4. Experience

Table 4

Sl No	Experience	Staff Nurse		Head Nurse		Total	
		No	Percentage	No	Percentage	No	Percentage
1	Up to 2 Years	7	28	0	0	7	14
2	2 - 4 Years	12	48	0	0	12	24
3	4 - 6 Years	6	24	10	40	16	32
4	Above 6 Years	0	0	15	60	15	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

Out of the 25 respondents surveyed from the Staff Nurses, a large majority of 12 respondents (48 per cent) have experience of 2 - 4 years. Out of the 25 surveyed respondents from the Head Nurse, a large majority 60 per cent have experience above 6 years (60 respondents). Thus, out of the entire sample of 50 respondents surveyed, a large majority of 31 respondents (62 per cent) have experience between above 4 years.

#### Part-B- Analysis of Opinion on Stress

In order to determine the causes for occupational stress among the nurses in Kerala, Four independent variables, Employment, Organisation, Stability in Work Life and Family, forming part of the occupational stress among the nurses were identified and analysed. They are factors related with:

#### 1. Employment

Table 5 deals with the opinion on the satisfaction level of respondents regarding employment factors. Majority of 25 respondents (50 per cent) agree to the concept. 7 respondents (14 per cent) strongly agree to this aspect. Another 10 respondents (20 per cent), 5 respondents (10 per cent) and 3 respondents (6 per cent) expressed their views as neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The mean intensity level of this variable is 64 per cent with a standard deviation of 26. This signifies that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that employment is a major problem which contributes towards alleviation of occupational stress among women nurses in Kerala.

Table 5

Variables	No/%	Satisfaction Level						Statistics All	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Avg	SD
Employment	No	3	5	10	25	7	50	64	26
	(%)	6	10	20	50	14	100		

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

#### 2. Organisation

Table 6 deals with the opinion on the satisfaction level of respondents regarding organisational factors. The mean intensity level of this variable is 76 per cent with a

standard deviation of 21. This signifies that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that organisational factors are the major contributing elements in alleviation of occupational stress among women nurses in Kerala.

Table 6

Variables	No/%	Satisfaction Level						Statistics All	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Avg	SD
Organisation	No	0	2	10	22	16	50	76	21
	(%)	0	4	20	44	32	100		

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

### 3. Stability in Work Life

Table 7 deals with the opinion on the satisfaction level of respondents regarding stability in work life. The mean

intensity level of this variable is 51 per cent with a standard deviation of 21. This signifies that in the opinion of respondents work life stability is also a contributing element towards occupational stress among women nurses in Kerala.

Table 7

Variables	No/%	Satisfaction Level						Statistics All	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Avg	SD
Stability in Work Life	No	7	9	13	17	4	50	51	30
	(%)	14	18	26	34	8	100		

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

### 4. Family

Table 8 deals with the opinion on the satisfaction level of respondents regarding family factors. There is an

average response regarding this concept which is clear from the mean intensity level which is only 50 per cent with a standard deviation of 30.

Table 8

Variables	No/%	Satisfaction Level						Statistics All	
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Avg	SD
Family	No	6	12	14	13	5	50	50	30
	(%)	12	24	28	26	10	100		

Source: SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) Output of Analysis of primary Data

## V. CONCLUSION

Most of the nurses in corporate hospitals are forced to work beyond the statutory working period. Apart from truncated wages, most of the nurses are not given occupational assistance and welfare like provident fund (PF) and gratuity. Despite of facing higher risk of infections the

nurses are not even provided with schemes for health coverage. There is also the lack of work place ethics and respect for the nurse profession, with the harassment by either the doctor or the management by frequently criticising them. With the labour department and government neglecting the problems faced by the nurses and lack of unions fighting for

the nurses further alleviate the evil effects of occupational stress.

#### VI. SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are made to reduce the impact of occupational stress among the women nurses in Kerala:

1. Proper and judicious allocation of work and work timing;
2. Ensuring proper shift rotation;
3. Fixation and implementation of proper salary/wage packages in accordance with Minimum Wage Act and prevailing Labour Laws;
4. Provide assistance and contribution towards PF and gratuity related schemes;
5. Encouraging health insurance schemes among women nurses;
6. Arranging regular and periodic medical checkup camps to women nurses working in corporate hospitals;
7. Maintaining cordial working relation between nurses and doctors;
8. Ensuring the functioning of Grievance Management Cells in corporate hospitals;