

# IDENTIFYING OCCUPATIONAL STRESSORS AMONG UNORGANIZED SECTORS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO STREET VENDORS IN BIHAR

Shaurya Prakash<sup>1</sup> & Kheyali Roy<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1&2</sup>Assistant Professor, Gopal Narayan Singh University, Bihar.

**Correspondence:** Kheyali Roy, e-mail: kheyaliroy9@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The stress a person experiences as a direct result of their profession is referred to as occupational stress or workplace stress. One of the primary issues with work-related stress is that most individuals are unaware of it and wait until it worsens before seeking treatment. The street vendors enjoy neither safety nor security at the workplace as they face constant harassment from the local authorities. **Aim:** This study aims to identify the stressors among the target group. Street vendors form the majority population of the unorganized sector in India. **Material & Methods:** The research used mixed method research design and as semi-structured interview schedule for data collection. The researcher has adopted a purposive sampling technique and referred 50 street vendors. **Results:** To enhance working conditions and thereby reduce stress for street vendors, regularised working patterns must be established in the unorganized sector. It is also possible to improve the quality of life by working in the unorganized sector through ergonomic interventions. **Conclusion:** To improve their quality of life, social and economic interventions might be planned using the current study's findings.

**Keywords:** Occupational stress, unorganized sector, stressors

## INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress indicates the stress that is being experienced as a result of anyone's profession. The workplace creates a long-lasting impact on the life of any individual. If we talk about the unorganized sector, most unorganized workers are actually working day and night to earn bread and butter. One of the primary issues with work-related stress is that most individuals are unaware of it and wait until it worsens before seeking treatment. The stress that a person experiences as a direct result of their occupation is referred to as occupational stress or workplace stress. Work is the performance of duties requiring the expenditure of both mental and physical energy, with the goal of producing goods and services that meet the requirements of people.

One could argue that the idea of stress is so complex that no one procedure or explanation can fully account for the occurrence. Stressors are pressures that are either psychological or physical that can lead to strain. The body's process of adjusting to external influences, adjustments, demands, and pressures is known as stress. Occupational stress, or stress brought on by one's workplace, is one of the most important health problems in the world. Due to assiduous and unpredictable stresses, stress and burnout have reached all-time highs in a variety of professions. Employers and employees are frantically trying to restore normalcy to the workplace. (Jacobs, 2024) An occupation is a job that one performs for

a regular salary. Because of the requirements of the modern work environment, pressure at the job cannot be avoided. Occupational stress is a subject of growing concern that is constantly on the radar, which encourages ongoing research in this field. The increased concern that people have for their own and their loved ones' health is most likely the source of this intense interest. In the current competitive, global environment, people must compete everywhere. On the other hand, the economy requires increased productivity, which is increased through resource exploitation, raising motivation levels, and lowering employee stress. The number of hours worked at each employment has greatly increased in the current economy. The workers' bodies are at a high risk of musculoskeletal disorders because they must work for extended periods of time in awkward and static body postures. The shifts in the working environment and conditions have caused the workers to experience stress, which may be divided into two categories: occupational stress brought on by the job or work and physical stress, which manifests as fatigue and discomfort in the workers' body parts. The current study found that physical exertion, a loss of family time, a risk of injury, discomfort from seasonal changes in working conditions, and tools were the five main causes of physical stress among unorganised sector workers. It may be stated that these five elements collectively account for the majority of the physical stress experienced by every employee. Employers may focus on these five elements to give employees better working circumstances. Employee stress levels might be frequently assessed, and counseling sessions could be planned for them to improve their physical and mental health. Counselors could also advise them that their productivity would increase, which would be advantageous to the firm (Devi, 2016). Understaffing, work overload (including

overtime, shift work, and high patient turnover), working conditions, inadequate food breaks, work experience, workplace conflict, violence, gender discrimination, job insecurity, and job dissatisfaction were some of the factors significantly associated with occupational sexism. Other significant risk factors included working in rural or economically depressed areas with poor infrastructure and not being rewarded. Additional stressors brought on by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic include worker redeployment, a shortage of personal protective equipment, and the worry of contracting the disease (Joshi, 2022). According to epidemiological research, women who work in stressful occupations are more likely to experience melancholy, anxiety, musculoskeletal disorders, high blood pressure, alcoholism, smoking, physical inactivity, and obesity, among other negative health behaviors (Zhou, 2022). Many workers frequently experience work-related stress, which is brought on by a number of variables, including persistent overwork. (Flores, 2023) Academic staff showed a high prevalence of at least one burnout dimension (Amer, 2022). The pace of work has accelerated, and information overload has increased significantly over the last few decades due to the technological revolution. The modern labour market's features, such as short-term contracts, new psychological agreements between employees and employers, and employability perceptions, put job security in jeopardy and are a never-ending source of occupational stress and, in severe situations, burnout. An individual experiences occupational stress when they are unable to manage the stressors related to their work environment (Freitas, 2023). In many populations, the degree of work stress has been implicated as a cause of job burnout. (Wu, 2023).

"Workplace" burnout is a syndrome associated

with a certain occupation that arises from ongoing stress at work that is not well handled. Tools from science that have been verified can be used to measure and quantify burnout. (American Psychological Association, 2023)

The current study revealed a number of variables that affect workplace stress levels. The key factors shown to increase stress levels are age, occupational type, time spent at work, the individual's priority at their place of employment, transportation, money, job happiness, no break in work, etc. Additionally, this work demonstrates how negatively stress impacts both the mental and physical health of employees. However, stress may be reduced if the coworkers are friendly and the workplace atmosphere is positive. The management authority and the individuals may adopt some appropriate policies to lower the stress level. Stress could be decreased if the authorities listened to the employee's problems and, if possible, brought them as close to their house as possible. Working from home frequently lowers stress. Making a policy to lessen occupational stress may include factors like fare selection, allowing vacations whenever a person feels exhausted, lowering transportation costs, counseling occasionally, job security, raising income, acknowledging work, making sure that tasks and responsibilities are understood clearly, reducing working hours, using proper shift schedules, organising training programs, and conducting appropriate medical surveillance. To lower stress levels, try meditation, yoga, regular exercise, music therapy, and living a balanced life (Gupta, 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic brought additional stressors to almost every area of life, from extended work hours to heightened responsibilities at home. These stressors have grown constant and unending as the world prepares for the third year of the pandemic, increasing everyone's risk of burnout. Burnout

can affect anybody exposed to long-term stressful situations, but first responders, educators, and human services workers are more vulnerable, particularly as the public continues to oppose COVID-19 preventative efforts (Abramson, 2022).

### **Stress: An Overview**

Stress, any kind of change that puts physical, mental, or psychological strain on a person, is considered to be stressful. Your body's reaction to anything that demands focus or action is stress. Everyone goes through periods of stress. However, how you handle stress has a significant impact on your general well-being.

Hans Selye first used the term "stress" in 1936 and later described it as "the body's general response to any desire for change." Selye had observed in numerous experiments that laboratory animals exposed to acute but different noxious physical and emotional stimuli all displayed the same pathologic changes, including stomach ulcerations, lymphoid tissue shrinkage, and an increase in the size of the adrenal glands.

### **Unorganized Sector: Concept and Understanding**

This sector has not yet experienced the advantages or benefits of organisation, in contrast to the organised sector. Many of them have ended up as invisible victims. The first challenge is defining or identifying the unorganised industry itself. The sector cannot be characterised by a single, key criterion. Despite having a big impact on the economy in terms of employment, a sizable portion of the workforce was still ignored. Consequently, an effort was made to solve the issues of unorganised workers' vulnerability.

### **Unable to Obtain Minimum Wages**

The Supreme Court of India ruled that while economic coercion could induce someone to

volunteer to work for less than the statutory minimum wage, paying employees less than the minimum wage required by law amounted to forced labour, which is against Article 23 of the Indian Constitution. In the majority of research on working conditions in the unorganised sector, the wage levels and earnings of workers have been examined, and the daily wages below the minimum wage rate are calculated. The breadth and effectiveness of the Minimum Wages Act, however, are constrained as seen by the current circumstance. in the global.

#### Lack of a Comfortable Physical Setting at Work

The welfare of the workforce is impacted by the lack of sanitary services. The lack of adequate restroom facilities makes the hygienic conditions in the majority of unorganised sector enterprises extremely precarious. There are little bathrooms, restrooms, and laundry facilities at work. One could argue that these amenities have not been offered to the industry's employees. In addition, there are some really bad physical conditions, such as lack of room or poor lighting or ventilation.

Accidentally Lost Money in Terms of Revenue  
Due to the potential loss of income, a job or other accident is a serious issue for migratory workers. Additionally, this entails increased medical costs, hospital stays, etc. When an accident results in partial or permanent incapacity, the loss is substantially greater. When a family's primary earner passes away, they must borrow money, use savings, or sell assets, and the resulting income loss is permanent.

#### No Knowledge of Labour Unions or Trade Unions

Most people, though not all, are unaware of the Trade Union's existence and regulations. The main goal of a trade union organisation is to resolve any disputes that can develop between an employee and an employer. Trade

union refers to a trade union that is currently registered under the Trade Unions Act of 1926. Trade Union, which can be examined using the following components.

#### Long Hours at Work

Long work hours have a significant negative influence on both the social and family lives of employees in general and women employees in particular. We have little interest in participating in cultural or social activities. Even your children are not properly cared for by you. In the unorganised sector of India, long working hours that go above the minimum wage are typical. Because there are no rules that can serve as guidelines for farm employees' working conditions, the agricultural sector does not have a set working time. The workers started working very early, at 6 a.m., for non-agricultural industries like fireworks, gaming, power plants, etc., until late at night, and then. In the loom sector, labour is structured so that earnings are determined on a daily basis, lasting from 12 to 15 hours. No adult worker is required to work more than 48 hours per week under the Factories Act of 1948, the Minimum Wage Act of 1948, and the Shops and Establishments Act. However, these restrictions on working hours have sometimes been disregarded. Almost no restrictions on service hours are also present.

#### Risk Factors for Workplace Health

Working conditions in the unorganised sector are the main factor contributing to adverse effects on employees' health

problems. Poor nutrition intake, coupled with low income and constant physical labour, worsens unorganised employees' health issues and puts their lives in danger. Poor workers frequently forget about their healthcare or end up in debt because of a lack of resources. Regarding domestic workers,

the majority of studies have noted health issues, primarily respiratory issues brought on by tobacco dust and body aches brought on by inhalation due to the unusual position that must be maintained throughout the working period.

## METHODS & MATERIALS

### Objective of the Study

The present study helps to explore the probable stressors among street vendors in the district of Rohtas. The identification of stressors among the unorganized sectors will help them to cope with the identified stressors and enhance their well-being, which will eventually result in increased productivity related to their occupation.

This study's broad objective is to identify the stressors and also explore their causes. The researcher will also try to suggest some coping strategies that will help the street vendors to eliminate the identified stressors. It is a well-known fact that stress actually decreases the efficiency level of any individual. Thus, it is very important to combat the stressors in a proper and efficient way impact of stressors among unorganized sectors. Additionally, this study will also help the unorganized sectors to realise about the stressors which they actually treat as the normal occurrence in their daily activities.

### Study Design

This study used the eclectic i.e., mixed method of research design with the semi-structured interview schedule as the main instrument for collecting data.

### Study Locale

The respondents were the street vendors across the district of Rohtas. The researcher has collected data from Sasaram and Dehri-on-Sone. Rohtas district is one of the thirty-eight (38) districts of Bihar. It came into existence when Shahabad District was

bifurcated into Bhojpur & Rohtas in 1972. Rohtas district is part of the Patna division. Languages spoken in this area are Bhojpuri, Hindi and English. The administrative headquarters of the district is Sasaram.

### Study Participants and Sampling

A cross-sectional study was conducted to identify the stressors among the street vendors in Rohtas. The researcher has adopted a simple random sampling technique to reach out to the respondents. In this study, the researcher approached 50 respondents to collect data.

#### Inclusive Criteria

- Street Vendors

#### Exclusive Criteria

- Other unorganized sectors

### Data Collection

The researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule to collect information related to the research area from 50 respondents in order to identify the probable stressors among the street vendors in the study locale. Given that the majority of the populace spoke Hindi or Bhojpuri, interviews were first conducted in Hindi as well as Bhojpuri language before being translated into English. The interviews were held individually and in private since it was thought that the respondents could be reluctant to respond to personal questions given the delicate nature of the research issue.

### Ethical Consideration

- Informed consent
- Voluntarily participation
- Confidentiality
- Anonymity

## RESULTS

Table: 1 Socio-demographic profile (Gender)

Categories	Respondents	Percentage
Male	35	70
Female	15	30
Total	50	100

Source: Author's compilation

From the above table, the researcher tried to determine the gender of the respondents in the study area. It was found that out of 50 respondents, 35, i.e., 70 percent of the street vendors, were male, and the remaining, i.e., 30 percent, were female. Thus, it can be said that the majority of the street vendors are male.

Table: 2 Educational Qualification

Categories	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Below Matriculation	20	9	29	58
Matriculation	5	3	8	16
Intermediate	3	2	5	10
Graduation & above	2	1	3	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's compilation

From the above table, the researcher tried to find out the educational qualifications of street vendors. While collecting the data, it was found that out of 50 respondents, 29, i.e., 58 percent were below matriculation; 8, i.e., 16 percent were matriculated; 5, i.e., 10 percent had an intermediate level of education, and 3, i.e., 6 percent were having graduation and above as their educational qualification.

Among male respondents out of 35, 20 i.e., 40 percent of the total respondents were below matriculation, 5 i.e., 10 percent of the total street vendors in the study population were matriculated, 3 i.e., 6 percent of the total respondents had an intermediate level of education and 2 i.e., 4 percent of the total respondents were having graduation and above as their educational qualification. Similarly, among female respondents, out of 15, 9 i.e., 18 percent of the total respondents were below matriculation, 3 i.e., 6 percent of the total street vendors in the study population were matriculated, 2 i.e., 4 percent of the total respondents were having an intermediate level of education and 1 i.e., 2 percent of the total respondents were having graduation and above as their educational qualification.

Table: 3 Street Vendors

Categories	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Fruit seller	10	3	13	26
Vegetable seller	10	7	17	34
Tea seller	5	2	7	14
Others (Seasonal)	10	3	13	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's compilation

From the above table, the researcher tried to identify the classification of street vendors. While collecting the data, it was found that out of 50 respondents, 13, i.e., 26 percent were fruit sellers, 17, i.e., 34 percent were vegetable sellers, 7, i.e., 14 percent were tea and snacks vendors, and 13, i.e., 26 percent were other seasonal street vendors.

Among male respondents out of 35, 10 i.e., 20 percent of the total respondents were fruit sellers, 10 i.e., 20 percent of the total street vendors were vegetable sellers, 5 i.e., 10 percent of the total respondents were tea sellers, and 10 i.e., 20 percent of the total respondents were seasonal street vendors. Similarly, among female respondents, out of 15, 3 i.e., 6 percent of the total respondents were fruit sellers, 7 i.e., 14 percent of the total street vendors were vegetable sellers, 2 i.e., 4 percent of the total respondents were tea sellers, and 3 i.e., 6 percent of the total respondents were seasonal street vendors.

Table: 4 Income Slab

Categories (per month)	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Below 10,000	10	8	18	36
10,000 – 20,000	20	5	25	50
20,000 – 30,000	4	1	5	10
30,000 – 40,000	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's compilation

From the above table, the researcher tried to find out the level of income street vendors earn on a monthly basis. While collecting the data, it was found that out of 50 respondents, 18 i.e., 36 percent were earning below 10,000 per month, 25 i.e., 50 percent were earning between 10,000 – 20,000, 5 i.e., 10 percent were earning between 20,000 – 30,000 and only 2 i.e., 4 percent were earning between 30,000 – 40,000.

Among male respondents out of 35 respondents, 10 i.e., 20 percent of the total population, were earning below 10,000 per month, 20 i.e., 40 percent of the total population, were earning between 10,000 – 20,000, 4 i.e., 8 percent of the total population were earning between 20,000 – 30,000 and

only 1 i.e., 2 percent of the total population were earning between 30,000 – 40,000. Similarly, among female respondents out of 15 respondents, 8 i.e., 16 percent of the total population were earning below 10,000 per month, 5 i.e., 10 percent of the total population was earning between 10,000 – 20,000, 1 i.e., 2 percent of the total population were earning between 20,000 – 30,000 and only 1 i.e., 2 percent of the total population were earning between 30,000 – 40,000.

### **Understanding of Occupational Stress and Burnout**

The present study revolves around the unorganized sectors with particular reference to the street vendors. While conducting research it was found that majority of the respondents are unaware about the occupational stress. They treat stress as their part and parcel of their life. Due to the continuous stress street vendors feel fatigue which hampers their well-being. When these stressors continue for a longer time then they experience burnout. The chronic stress actually leads to the burnout among the street vendors. The majority of participants pointed out that they actually need awareness related to mental health. The researcher found that majority of the emphasised the lack of accurate and readily available information regarding occupational health.

Occupational Stressors: Identifying the Unidentified

Stressors are things, people, or circumstances that cause someone to feel stressed out and activate their stress response system. Effective stress management begins with awareness of one's stressors. The researcher explored the various stressors which will further help the street vendors to enhance their well-being and eliminate the identified stressors.

- ◆ Online payment method
- ◆ Lot of competition

- ◆ Quality and profit: Inversely proportional
- ◆ Transportation cost
- ◆ Increased inflation
- ◆ Number of family members and earning members: Inversely proportional
- ◆ Lack of storage capacity

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Unorganized industries like agriculture, construction, retail, road vendors, small-scale service providers, salt pans, household work, rework, beedi factories, etc., account for the vast majority of the country's workforce. Unorganized labourers manage under difficult circumstances without enough benefits. The protection and assistance provided to workers in the unorganised sector are crucial for both economic and social development. Government regulations that safeguard these workers should be scrupulously adhered to, and those who abuse them should face severe penalties to promote genuine development.

### **Recommendation and Way Forward**

Employees in the unorganised sector should be given benefits such as pensions during the rainy season, maternity leave compensation, accident insurance, natural mortality benefits, and educational aid for kids pursuing higher education. The federal and state governments should create special programmes to assist unorganised employees with their individual expectations and requirements. Unorganized workers make up roughly 50 percent of the GDP. However, social security programmes for the organised labour have received strong legal support. Social security measures only cover 6 percent of unorganised workers; hence all unorganised workers should be covered in order to fully develop the nation. Additionally, the government can use this technique to track down genuine altruistic employees and urge unorganised people to report them. The government needs to spread

the word about the State Fund's welfare initiatives as well as the unorganised Workers' Welfare Fund. Social workers have access to the necessary resources, context, guidelines, and philosophical underpinnings through a variety of international conferences, resolutions, and conventions that have been ratified not only by numerous nations. In order to alleviate and address social issues that affect specific people, groups, or communities, social workers employ their talents and knowledge of human behavioral and social systems.

## REFERENCE

- Abramson, A. (2022). Burnout and stress are everywhere. *Monitor on Psychology, 53*(1). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/special-burnout-stress>
- Amer, S. A., Elotla, S. F., Ameen, A. E., Shah, J., & Fouad, A. M. (2022). Occupational burnout and productivity loss: A cross-sectional study among academic university staff. *Frontiers in Public Health, 10*, 861674. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.861674>
- American Psychological Association. (2023). *Employers need to focus on workplace burnout: Here's why*. <https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/workplace-burnout>
- Devi, K. K. (2016). Exploring the key factors of physical stress among unorganized workers empirical evidence from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 4*(8)
- Flores Luna R, De la Rocha C, Cid López MA et al. Assessment of work-related stress and burnout among clinical research occupations, (<https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.132363.1>)
- Freitas, M., Moreira, A., & Ramos, F. (2023). Occupational Stress and Turnover Intentions in Employees of the Portuguese Tax and Customs Authority: Mediating Effect of Burnout and Moderating Effect of Motivation. *Adm. Sci.* <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13120251>
- Gupta, S. (2020). Analysis of Different Factors of Occupational Stress and Associated Health Problems in West Bengal. *Asian Review of Social Sciences* ISSN: 2249-6319 Vol. 9 No.1, pp. 39-47
- Jacobs, C. (2024). Occupational Stress and Burnout. IntechOpen. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.1003104
- Joshi, K., Modi, B., Singhal, S., & Gupta, S. (2022). Occupational Stress among Health Care Workers. In (Ed.), *Identifying Occupational Stress and Coping Strategies*
- Saha, D. (2011). Working Life of Street Vendors in Mumbai, *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, Vol. 54, No. 2
- Wu, L.-C., Chou, C.-Y., Kao, C.-Y., & Leal-Costa, C. (2023). Workplace social support as a mediating factor in the association between occupational stressors and job burnout: A study in the Taiwanese nursing context. *Journal of Nursing Management, 1-11*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/5599128>
- Zhou, S., Chen, H., Liu, M. (2022). The relationship between occupational stress and job burnout among female manufacturing workers in Guangdong, China: a cross-sectional study. *Sci Rep 12*, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-24491-0>

**Conflict of interest:** None

**Role of funding source:** None