



# A study of socio-economic status and coping strategies among flour mill workers in Udham Singh Nagar district in Uttarakhand

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## ARTICLE INFO :

**Received** : 15.12.2015  
**Revised** : 24.03.2016  
**Accepted** : 05.05.2016

## KEY WORDS :

Stress, Coping, Work environment, Flour mill workers, Stress, Antibodies

## HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE :

Lohani, Dipti and Vinay, Deepa (2016). A study of socio-economic status and coping strategies among flour mill workers in Udham Singh Nagar district in Uttarakhand. *Adv. Res. J. Soc. Sci.*, 7 (1): 26-30, DOI: 10.15740/HAS/ARJSS/7.1/26-30.

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## ABSTRACT

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the major challenges which most of the industries facing is stress. Stress is the result of mental and physical response and adaptation to the real or perceived changes and challenges in one's lives. Stress affects workers in a number of ways, both physically and emotionally, and in varying intensities. The objective of this study was to assess the level of stress of flour mill workers and to suggest some coping strategies so that mill workers could control their stress. The present study was descriptive in nature. An attempt was made to study the problems resulted from stress due to which flour mill workers were affected. The study was conducted at two flour mills of Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand. The total sample size was 120 in which 60 workers were selected from the flour mill of Lalpur and 60 respondents were selected from the flour mill of Kichha. The findings showed that majority of respondents sometimes feel their contribution in the organization was being neglected. Most of the respondents were found highly stressed in their work organization.

## INTRODUCTION

Stress is a pattern of negative physiological states and psychological responses occurring in situations where individuals perceive threats to their well-being, which they may be unable to meet (Gross and McIlveen, 1996). Whether stressors are harmful or not depends solely on individuals appraise the stressors and how the mind interprets them (Lazarus, 1975). Stress affects workers in a number of ways, both physically and emotionally,

and in varying intensities. While research has shown that some stress can be positive, making them more alert and helping them perform better in certain situations. Stress is only healthy as it is short-lived. Excessive or prolonged stress leads to heart disease and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. It is estimated that about 10.4 million working days are lost each year throughout stress and anxiety-related conditions, costing industry more than 3 billion. Stress can affect mill workers in varying levels, so while it may be caused by a major

upheaval, such as unemployment, a series of minor irritations like feeling unappreciated at work or arguing with co-workers can be equally debilitating. Stress is natural way by which workers of flour mill responds to the demands of their working conditions. Stress can be a result of both positive and negative experiences for mil workers, and it is a necessary part of their daily lives. According to workers who are presently working in flour mill stress motivates them to accomplish tasks or make needed changes. Flour mill workers feel the pressure of their environment during times of transition and in preparation for significant life events (*i.e.*, in anticipation of a job interview). Flour mill workers suffer from too much stress because of their working environment or lack of co-ordination between co-workers. Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts (both behavioural and psychological), that flour mill workers employ to tolerate, reduce or minimize stressful events. Stress caused many problems for workers of flour mill. They lose interest in their work due to stress which affects the productivity of flour mill.

#### Objectives :

- To study the socio-economic characteristics of flour mill workers.
- To study about the coping strategies of flour mill workers in terms of :

- Work environment
- Work organization

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The sample of this study was selected from various sections of flour mill industry, Kichha and Lalpur. This has a plant and it produces bran, for different products of Britannia. The sample consists of total 120 individuals from which more than 80 per cent of the employees were from loading –unloading section. Socio-economic Status For the assessment of socio-economic status of the employees, socio-economic status scale developed by Singh and Vinay (2012) was used. To know the workers socio-economic status various independent variables such as age, family type and family income have been used to measure the socio-economic status of the respondents. Coping Strategies-Employee coping Strategies Questionnaire which was designed by Telaprolu and George (2005) was used. Respondents indicate how much they have affected by stress and they need coping strategies to reduce their stress and to do their work properly.

## OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present investigation

Socio-economic characteristics	Flour mill workers		
	Frequency	Percentage	
Age	18-25 years	55	45.83
	25-35 years	41	34.16
	35-45 years	17	14.16
	45-55 years	6	5.00
	55-65 years	1	0.83
Family type	2-4 members	57	47.50
	4-6 members	30	25.00
	6-10 members	20	16.67
	10-15 members	12	10.00
	15-20 members	1	0.83
Family income	Rs. 5000-6000	22	18.33
	Rs. 6000-7000	5	4.17
	Rs. 7000-8000	4	3.33
	Rs. 8000-9000	63	52.50
	Rs. 9000-10000	20	6.00
	Above Rs. 10000	6	5.00

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

### Socio-economic characteristics of flour mill workers:

Table 1 envisaged about demographic characteristics of flour mill workers which revealed that majority (45.83%) of respondents were found between the age group of 18-25 years followed by approx. Thirty four per cent of respondents were between the age group of 25-35 years, whereas fourteen per cent workers were found between 35-45 years. Only five per cent of flour mill workers were of age group 45-55 years, whereas only one per cent respondents were found between age group 55-65 years.

A study by Zodpey and Tiwari (1998) showed that the subjects of study were living in Nagpur city and working in flour mills of the South Zone. 286 workers

were included in the study in which 83 workers were from the age group less than 20. Maximum 110 workers were between 21-30 years of age. 31-40 age group workers were 74 and 13 respondents were of 41-50 years of age. Only 6 respondents were in age group at 50 or more than 50.

The responses regarding family members were analyzed and it was found that majority (47.50%) of respondents were having very small family (2-4 members) followed by small family with (4-6 members) were twenty five per cent, while 16.67 per cent of the respondents belonged to medium family, whereas ten per cent of workers belonged to large family with 10-15 members and only 1 family was having more than 15 members in the family.

Regarding the family income, majority of respondents (52.50%) were having monthly income (Rs. 5000-6000), while 4.17 per cent respondents of flour mill workers

Sr. No.	Statements	Responses				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	Seen isolation from work in organization	13 (21.67)	10 (16.67)	20 (33.33)	11 (18.33)	6 (10.00)
2.	Role is organized enough in the organization	3 (5.00)	6 (10.00)	25 (41.67)	16 (26.67)	10 (16.67)
3.	People in the organization can understand priorities	10 (16.67)	6 (10.00)	8 (13.33)	15 (25.00)	21 (35.00)
4.	Feel sad when contribution for organization is neglected	6 (10.00)	2 (3.33)	30 (50.00)	16 (26.67)	6 (10.00)
5.	Success and gender are not associated in the organization	18 (30.00)	2 (3.33)	9 (15.00)	20 (33.33)	11 (18.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sr. No.	Statements	Responses				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	Unable to do work because of noise	24 (40.00)	14 (23.33)	9 (15.00)	6 (10.00)	7 (11.67)
2.	Waiting for the day to rest	14 (23.33)	10 (16.67)	22 (36.67)	11 (18.33)	3 (5.00)
3.	Hope to face new day in work	11 (18.33)	9 (15.00)	24 (40.00)	10 (16.67)	6 (10.00)
4.	Excitement level has been low due to hope	11 (18.33)	6 (10.00)	22 (36.67)	5 (8.33)	16 (26.67)
5.	Sufficient team behavior and collaboration	10 (16.67)	25 (41.67)	5 (8.33)	9 (15.00)	11 (18.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Sr. No.	Statements	Responses				
		Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	Know about the expectations of co-workers	24 (40.00)	14 (23.33)	9 (15.00)	6 (10.00)	7 (11.67)
2.	Demand advice of co-workers based on experience	14 (23.33)	10 (16.67)	22 (36.67)	11 (18.33)	3 (5.00)
3.	Inspired to do great work in the organization because of the support of co-workers	11 (18.33)	9 (15.00)	24 (40.00)	10 (16.67)	6 (10.00)
4.	Believe in co-workers when feel difficulty in work	11 (18.33)	6 (10.00)	22 (36.67)	5 (8.33)	16 (26.67)
5.	Receive great respect from co-workers when initiate any work	10 (16.67)	25 (41.67)	5 (8.33)	9 (15.00)	11 (18.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

were having their income (Rs. 6000-7000). Six per cent of flour mill workers were having their income (Rs. 9000-10000) and only 5 per cent were those who were having their income above Rs. 10000.

The findings by Kiran *et al.* (2012) depicted that maximum percentage of the respondents were found in middle age group (80.5%), scheduled caste (45.5%), illiterate (62.5%), joint family (67%) having above nine members in their families (36%), agriculture as main occupation (51.66%), brick wall tiled (52.5%) houses, non-participation in socio-political organization (63.82%). Majority of the respondents were found in medium level of socio-economic status (57.5%) having land holding category of marginal farmers (72.5%), medium level of value orientation (67%), respectively. These facts clearly indicate poor socio-economic condition of the respondent.

It is evident from Table 2 that maximum (33.33%) respondents sometimes saw isolation from work in organization followed by (21.67%) respondents who were always seeing isolation from work, while 18.33 per cent respondents rarely seeing isolation from work whereas only 10 per cent respondents were never having any problem. It was also found that only 16.67 per cent respondents were never having any problem. It was also found that only 16.67 per cent respondents were often feeling isolation from work in their organization. It was also found that majority (41.67%) respondents felt that their role was sometimes organized enough felt that their role was sometimes organized enough in the organization followed by 26.67 per cent flour mill workers whose role was rarely organized in the organization. Very few 5 per cent respondents were always organized in the organization. People working in the organization can never understand priorities by thirty five per cent while 25 per cent workers can rarely understand priorities in the organization.

It is clear from Table 2 that maximum (50%) respondents sometimes feel sad when their contribution for organization is neglected followed by 26.67 per cent workers who rarely feel sad when their contribution for organization is neglected. It was also found that thirty per cent respondents always felt that success and gender were not associated in the organization while 33.33 per cent respondents rarely felt that success and gender is not associated in the organization.

Table 3 shows about the work environment in which

majority of workers always unable to work because of noise while fifteen per cent sometimes revealed that maximum (36.67%) were sometimes waiting for the day to rest and majority (40.00%) respondents were hoping to face new day in work. It was also found that (36.67%) workers sometimes feel that their excitement level has been low due to hope followed by 26.67 per cent respondents whose excitement level has never been low due to hope. Sufficient team behaviour and collaboration was often felt by majority (41.67%) of flour mill workers.

Table 4 describes co-ordination of workers which shows that 40 per cent respondents always know about the expectations of co-workers, while only 15 per cent respondents sometimes know about what their co-workers expected from them whereas 10 per cent respondents rarely know about this. The workers who never know about expectation of co-workers were only 11.67 per cent. Majority (36.67%) respondents who always demand advice of co-workers. It was further revealed that 18.33 per cent rarely demand advice of co-workers while only 5.00 per cent respondents never demand advice of their co-workers based on experiences. Maximum respondents (40.00%) were sometimes inspired to do work in the organization followed by (36.67%) who sometimes believe in co-workers when found difficulty in work and majority (41.67%) often receive great respect from co-workers.

### Conclusion :

It is observed that stress affects health of flour mill workers and there are many negative consequences which occur due to difficulty in work environment. It was also found that maximum workers were affected by noise of their work environment. Some workers feel isolation from work, maximum workers were unable to take rest in their work environment and there were many people who feel sad when their contribution was being neglected in their work organization. These were some negative consequences which affect flour mill workers which can be controlled by providing some coping strategies to mill workers by which these problems can be controlled and workers can also give their maximum output.

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