

Perceived Stress among Municipal Supervisors: An In-depth Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive paper delves into the concept of perceived stress among supervisors in municipal corporations, emphasizing its influence on occupational functioning. Perceived stress, characterized by an individual's subjective evaluation of stress levels, has a profound impact on job performance, absenteeism, interpersonal relationships, and overall job satisfaction (Wakode et al., 2020). Through an extensive literature review and case studies, this paper aims to comprehensively understand the challenges faced by supervisors in municipal corporations in India and provide insights into addressing perceived stress effectively.

Keywords: *Perceived Stress, Municipal Supervisors*

Perceived stress, a psychological construct, reflects an individual's assessment of stress levels based on perceptions, feelings, and cognitive appraisals of stressors and coping mechanisms (Cohen et al., 1983). This paper delves into the context of municipal supervisors in India, exploring how perceived stress affects their professional roles and responsibilities.

The cited literature offers a comprehensive view of perceived stress and its implications in various contexts. Wakode et al.'s (2020) study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on stress levels in India during lockdown is particularly relevant to municipal corporation officers, shedding light on stressors related to the pandemic, providing essential context for understanding stress experiences within this group. Bhui et al. (2016) contribute by identifying common workplace stressors and effective coping strategies, illustrating the universal applicability of stress management techniques, which could be beneficial for municipal corporation contexts. Rahaman and Sinha's (2023) exploration of perceived stress among teachers emphasizes the relationship between stress and job satisfaction, offering insights applicable to municipal officers regarding the influence of stress on overall well-being and professional fulfillment. Kumar et al.'s (2021) research connecting perceived stress and quality of life during the pandemic underlines the importance of stress management for enhanced quality of life, offering a pertinent perspective for municipal officers seeking to maintain their well-being amid challenging circumstances. Overall, these studies provide a foundation for understanding perceived stress and its impact, offering

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Received: November 18, 2023; Revision Received: November 25, 2023; Accepted: November 28, 2023

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valuable insights that can be applied to address stress concerns among municipal supervisors. Furthermore, the literature cited also encompasses studies relevant to occupational stress and specific working conditions. Ragesh et al.'s exploration of occupational stress among Indian police personnel highlights the importance of addressing stress in public service roles, reminding us of the potential stressors faced by municipal corporation officers and underscoring the need for tailored interventions to support their mental and physical health. Vidhya Venugopal et al.'s research, focusing on health concerns of women in specific work environments, provides critical insights into gender-sensitive labor policies, advocating for enhanced workplace productivity and well-being, which is essential in considering the diverse demographics within the municipal corporation workforce. Finally, Rajan's investigation into the occupational stress experienced by sanitary workers unveils the challenges faced by this group, emphasizing the significance of addressing stressors to ensure the well-being of these workers, illustrating the need for targeted stress management approaches in distinct occupational settings. Together, these studies offer a multi-dimensional understanding of stress in various occupational contexts, presenting valuable perspectives to inform interventions tailored to the needs of municipal supervisors and workers.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a qualitative approach, integrating a thorough literature review and case studies. The literature review involves analyzing academic papers, articles, and reports concerning perceived stress, its impact on occupational functioning, and the challenges specific to municipal supervisors on Perceived Stress and Occupational Functioning: The paper outlines the ways in which perceived stress significantly influences occupational functioning, including its impact on job performance, absenteeism, interpersonal relationships, burnout, health issues, job satisfaction, and career advancement. Understanding these dynamics is essential for crafting targeted interventions and strategies. The responsibilities and challenges of Municipal Supervisors delineates the typical responsibilities of municipal supervisors, encompassing administrative oversight, infrastructure maintenance, public services delivery, urban planning, budget management, public engagement, compliance, reporting, disaster management, and collaboration. Concurrently, it outlines the prevalent challenges faced by these supervisors, including limited financial resources, urbanization pressure, bureaucratic hurdles, political interference, and more. The researcher observed and assessed during one training program of Municipal Corporation Supervisors at Mahatma Gandhi labor institute in 2023. The objective was to understand and evaluate the perceived stress levels of Municipal Corporation Supervisors. To achieve this, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Cohen was employed as the primary assessment tool (Cohen et al., 1983). The PSS utilizes a scoring system based on predefined norms, where scores range from 0 to 3 for statements, with reverse scoring for positive statements (3-2-1-0). The total PSS score for each individual can range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived stress. The scores were categorized into three levels: low stress (0-13), moderate stress (14-26), and high perceived stress (27-40). The application included the administration of the Perceived Stress Scale to 35 participants, predominantly supervisors from the health and engineering departments within the Municipal Corporation. The supervisors' ages ranged from 28 to 55 years. Participants were asked to fill out the PSS questionnaire, and subsequent analysis of the scores revealed a notable level of perceived stress, predominantly categorized as moderate to high among the supervisors. This information will be instrumental in formulating targeted interventions and strategies for the well-being of these professionals.

DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature offers valuable insights into the impact of stress on various professional sectors and its repercussions on well-being. Wakode et al. (2020) shed light on the profound stress experienced by the Indian population during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly emphasizing the fears and anxieties related to the virus and the future. Bhui et al.'s (2016) exploration of workplace stress factors and coping mechanisms, although not directly tied to municipal officers, emphasizes the effectiveness of certain coping strategies, providing universal lessons applicable to diverse work environments, including municipal corporations. Rahaman and Sinha (2023) underscore the link between perceived stress and job satisfaction, serving as a reminder that understanding how stresses impacts job contentment is critical for improving the performance and well-being of public servants. Kumar et al.'s (2021) study, although not directly linked to municipal officers, highlights the broader implications of effectively managing stress, suggesting a positive correlation between managing stress and overall quality of life, a crucial insight for the well-being of municipal corporation officers amid challenging circumstances. Additionally, the study by Rajan (2012) on occupational stress among sanitary workers illuminates the need to address stressors to enhance the well-being of this specific workforce, offering vital lessons in managing stress within different occupational domains. These studies collectively emphasize the necessity of targeted stress management interventions to ensure the mental and physical health of professionals across diverse sectors, including municipal corporations. The discussion synthesizes the findings, highlighting the critical need to address perceived stress among municipal supervisors. It emphasizes the importance of organizational interventions, stress management strategies, and collaborative efforts to mitigate the impact of stress on occupational functioning.

CONCLUSION

This paper underscores the significance of addressing perceived stress among municipal supervisors, advocating for tailored interventions and support systems to enhance their mental and physical well-being. By fostering a conducive work environment and implementing stress reduction strategies, municipal corporations can elevate job satisfaction and overall productivity among their supervisors, positively impacting the community they serve.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Vaishnav, S. (2023). Perceived Stress among Municipal Supervisors: An In-depth Analysis. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(4), 1725-1728. DIP:18.01.157.20231104, DOI:10.25215/1104.157