

**Roots of Resilience: Understanding Mental Health in Knowledge
Institutions and Coping through Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) -
an exploratory study and possible strategic responses**

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Abstract

As India is moving in the direction of a knowledge society, the role of knowledge institutions is critical. These knowledge institutions are required to be high performing ones in generating, processing and disseminating knowledge to stakeholders and society at large with a view to enhancing human condition and welfare. This in turn calls for different kinds of demands on knowledge creators in such institutions. The demands placed on them and the multiple roles they are expected to play lead to various kinds of stress, not just burnout stress resulting in mental health challenges of various hues. The mental health struggles of knowledge creators are increasingly recognized, yet there remains a significant gap in comprehensive support and understanding from organizations, particularly within human resource management. In addition, there are inadequate responses to such issues at the organizational level as also the need to formulate strategies by industry bodies and community level initiatives. This study highlights the critical role that institutions can play in managing their human capital from a mental well-being perspective, emphasizing the need for proactive initiatives.

The research study derives inferences from specific case situations of knowledge creators. Using survey method with knowledge creators in chosen knowledge institutions (high performing ones), we uncover a range of mental health challenges, including burnout, social

comparison, and the prioritization of performance metrics over personal well-being. These challenges underscore the importance of an organizational framework that prioritizes mental health, fostering an environment where creators feel supported and valued. The study explores the potential for considering Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) modalities such as yoga, ayurveda, meditation, satsangh, classical music and dhyana to maintain overall wellbeing as part of organization wide initiatives. The survey also envisions to capture such coping strategies adopted by the knowledge creators on their own irrespective of organizational level endeavor.

Human resource management must evolve to address these unique challenges faced by knowledge creators. By implementing targeted strategies such as mental health resources, organizations can mitigate the adverse effects of stress and comparison inherent in knowledge creator's domain. Furthermore, fostering a culture of empathy and understanding can reshape narratives surrounding mental health, encouraging creators to prioritize their well-being.

This research advocates for a paradigm shift within knowledge institutions, calling for HR practices that not only recognize the mental health needs of knowledge creators but also actively contribute to their overall well-being. By aligning organizational objectives with the mental health of creators, institutions can enhance engagement, creativity, and productivity, ultimately benefiting both knowledge creators and the larger society. Addressing mental health in this context is not just a moral imperative; it is essential for cultivating a sustainable and thriving ecosystem for individuals who are knowledge creators. The study also would seek insights as to the awareness in industry bodies to coping strategies based on Indian Knowledge Systems and explores strategic imperatives at the policy level.

Key words: *knowledge creators, human capital, mental health, wellbeing, Indian Knowledge Systems, human resource, strategic imperatives*

Introduction

India embarked on a path of liberalizing the economy in the 1990s. This process spurred the setting up of organizations and institutions focusing on creation, processing and dissemination of knowledge in various sectors. As the country is moving in the direction of becoming a knowledge-based society, high performance knowledge institutions (HPKI) are required to play a very important role by providing a platform for individuals to excel and contributing to their fullest potential. Knowledge creators in HPKI (High Performance Knowledge Institutions) face multiple demands, leading to various kinds of stresses. Often stress is related to burnout stress but increasingly it is recognized that in knowledge institutions other kinds of stress related to role dimensions are encountered by knowledge professionals. These in turn result in mental health challenges to be coped with by the knowledge professionals. While there is a certain level of understanding on these issues, there is a need to provide more systemic and comprehensive support to individuals in coping with these aspects. Due to a lack of deeper understanding of the issue and allied dimensions, the responses are also inadequate at the organizational level. Industry bodies also ought to develop deeper understanding to advocate changes. Knowledge institutions ought to play a proactive role in formulating strategies to manage human capital from a mental well-being perspective. The study seeks to understand the different types of

stresses faced, the significance of organization driven initiatives for creating an enabling ecosystem that prioritizes mental well-being of knowledge professionals. The study, in addition examines the scope for Indian Knowledge System (IKS) based initiatives to mitigate different kinds of stress faced by knowledge professionals. The study also explores strategic imperatives at the policy level.

The research explores the problem to the different kinds of stresses face by knowledge professionals working in knowledge institutions which in turn results in different kinds of mental health issues. The study also focuses on existing support mechanisms within the organizations, and the extent to which the need for support is recognized and probes as to the scope for Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) based initiatives by knowledge institutions to mitigate the problem thereby enhancing human capital.

2.0 Literature review

As part of the research study an endeavour was made to undertake a broad literature review on the chosen topic. Using key words such as stress and knowledge organizations, online search was undertaken and also from leading journals. Pestonjee (1987) in an early paper examined executive stress. He queried as to whether executive stress is to be eschewed. He further highlighted that an individual could use one's resources and that of the institution and mitigate stress in the pursuit of personal growth to excel in one's arena. In addition, he identified different kinds of organizational Role stresses such as Inter-role distance, role stagnation, Role expectation, Role erosion, Role overload, Role isolation, Personal inadequacy, self-role distance, Role ambiguity and Resource inadequacy and advocated the importance of individuals and organizations to reduce stress and formulate appropriate mechanisms. Zand (1996) highlighted that modern organizations planned to be ahead of competitors in the search for knowledge and deployed the same. This in turn caused different categories of knowledge stress etc. The researcher also identified special characteristics of knowledge professionals. The study emphasized the relevance of leaders to be aware of these dimensions to alleviate negative impacts. Shah (1997,2014) defined “‘knowledge institution’ (as) an organization usefully engaged in acquiring, creating, imparting and applying knowledge to address pressing needs of the society; and its value is determined by the quality and scale of its contribution in addressing social needs”. In his research he further identified the characteristics of HPKI (High Performance Knowledge Institutions). This pioneering and one of the earliest studies on the topic in a real and applied context sought to differentiate between knowledge organizations and knowledge institutions. The study highlighted the features leading to evolution of HPKIs and the importance of HPKIs having to validate their performance to society. Organizational design and organizational culture are two facets that are important dimensions in addition to others in HPKIs. A research study explored the issues relating to technostress, work life and organizations in knowledge intensive sectors (Salzmann-Erikson et al 2024). The researchers proposed an Integrated Technostress Resilience Framework to build organizational competence for great resilience in the background of technological changes. The researchers further highlighted the need for integrating information systems, organizational behaviour and health sciences for a more robust workplace environment. Given the fluctuations and uncertainties in the business environment Conti.F et al (2024), underscored the need for adaptive strategies. Deploying an exploratory research design highlighted the relevance of mapping knowledge management practices with self-management characteristics across organizational dimensions to build an innovative and resilient organizational culture. A study by Rodriguez-Jimenez, Carmona M et al (2022) sought to gain insights into body awareness interventions on stress and wellbeing among university faculty. This

research used an experimental design and mixed methods approach incorporating different questionnaires focusing on body awareness, mindfulness and perceived scales and concluded that body awareness interventions led to decreased levels of perceived stress. Gopinath and Chitra (2021) examined the relationship between knowledge management and occupational stress. Based on their study concluded that strong and effective knowledge management practices reduced occupational stress levels. Zhongju (2018) using a sample of 263 firms investigated the influence of institutional pressure on environmental innovation and the role of knowledge acquisition. Marques et al (2019) surveyed 323 respondents to investigate the relationship between occupational stress, disengagement from knowledge sharing and knowledge management maturity. That the research study focused on public administration was a novel dimension. The study found high levels of occupational stress was positively correlated with higher maturity in knowledge management. A research study by Ipsen and Anderson (2013), given the background of stress faced by knowledge workers in workplace despite employee autonomy, focused on organizational level interventions in ten knowledge intensive organizations. Deploying a multi-level, salutogenic and participatory approach in the research, the study implied that work related stress of knowledge workers could be avoided. In another study Ipsen and Jensen (2012) using a qualitative research design that included 27 interviews from five knowledge intensive organizations highlighted that organizational issues were both opportunities and sources of stress. Existing approaches were short-term and there was a need for long-term preventive strategies with focus on modifying organizational and managerial dimensions as per this study. Sonnentag and Fresse (2003) examined several studies in the context of organizational stress, health and performance and called for more rigorous methodology in research. Brown et al (2023) drawing inspiration from other humanitarian settings proposed using non-specialists to mental health support in colleges and universities and this would enable both better physical and economic access to mental health care. Moghimi and Stevenson (2023) researched on mental health struggles of students in colleges and underscored the need for tailored mental health care to students making the same effective and inclusive. Duffy (2023) using U-Flourish survey tracked mental health of students in university settings to design targeted mental health programs. Another research study highlighted the need for mindfulness exercises, peer support and changes in workplace policies as university staff encounter unique problems stemming from heavy workload and anxieties such as job insecurity (Worsley et al 2022). A couple of research studies have examined the role of emerging technologies such AI, online platforms and mental health apps in dealing with mental health issues (Olawade 2024, Iwamasa 2024 and Bond 2023). The need for preventive and early interventions in mental health care to deter long term problems by teaching resilience skills to students in universities was emphasized in another study (Colizi 2020). Mental health barriers in higher education were examined by another study that identified issues such as stigma, financial constraints and insufficient support in accessing mental health care and called for more financial and other resource support (Duraku et al 2024). In India, the Government of India formulated a comprehensive National Mental Health Policy which covered several dimensions and emphasized mental health support in workplaces and support systems based on Indian knowledge (Govt of India 2014)

The literature review as above is summarized in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Summary of literature review

Authors	Title of the Paper	Findings
Pestonjee D M (1987)	Executive stress should it always be avoided?	Identifies different kinds of organizational stresses and potential organizational and individual response approaches
Shah, Tushar (1994, 2014)	Secrets of creating High Performance Knowledge Institutions (HPKI)	Based on case studies of High Performance Knowledge Institutions (HPKI) the study highlights dimensions that lead to design and development of HPKIs
Sharma, Subhash (2008)	Character Competence of the corporation	In addition to business competence and ethical dimensions ought to be embedded. Impacts professionals negatively when ethical dimensions become weak
Ipsen,C, Jensen (2012)	Organizational options for preventing work-related stress in knowledge work	Highlights stress issues specific to knowledge workers, despite their control and influence, and discusses frustration from such stress reducing performance.
Ipsen, C., and Andersen, V. (2014)	A Multi-level and Participatory Model for Prevention of Work-Related Stress in Knowledge Work	Proposes a salutogenic approach focusing on organizational redesign to improve productivity and working conditions, including managerial support, visualization, and defined phases of work.
I.Zhongju (2018)	Institutional Pressure, Knowledge Acquisition, and a Firm's Environmental Innovation	Demonstrates that regulative and normative pressures positively affect environmental innovation via knowledge acquisition. Cognitive pressure was not significant.
Marques et al (2019)	The Relationship Between Stress and Maturity in Knowledge Management	Found positive relationships between organizational stress, disengagement from knowledge sharing, and knowledge management maturity in a higher education setting in Brazil.

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Gopinath, Chitra and Kalpana (2021)	A Study on Relationship Between Knowledge Management and Occupational Stress	Positive correlation and significant influence of knowledge management on occupational stress among faculty members.
Kallio, J. et al (2021)	Unobtrusive Continuous Stress Detection in Knowledge Work—Statistical Analysis on User Acceptance	Knowledge workers showed willingness to adopt unobtrusive stress detection systems, with minimal concerns about privacy-sensitive methods.
Rodríguez-Jiménez Rosa M et al (2022)	Stress, Subjective Wellbeing, and Self-Knowledge in Higher Education Teachers	Training interventions like Hatha Yoga and Dance Movement Therapy improved self-knowledge, emotional regulation, and stress reduction in university teachers.
Salzmann-Erikson M,et al (2024)	Bridging Technostress and Continuous Learning in Knowledge-Intensive Organizations	Technostress negatively impacts job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Proposes a resilience framework using socio-technical systems to address this stress and enhance continuous learning.
Conti, F. et al (2024)	Analysis of Knowledge Management Practices for Knowledge-Intensive Organizations' Self-Management	KM practices support self-management and foster innovation in Knowledge-Intensive Organizations, transitioning to autonomy-focused cultures.
Adam D. Brown et al (2023)	Transforming Mental Healthcare in Higher Education Through Scalable Interventions	Proposes using non-specialists to provide mental health care in universities, inspired by humanitarian methods to improve accessibility and affordability.
Elnaz Moghimi and Callum Stephenson (2023)	Mental health challenges, treatment experiences, and care needs of post-secondary students: a cross-sectional mixed-methods study	Highlights stigma, limited resources, and lack of personalized care in student mental health. Calls for tailored interventions to meet diverse needs.
David B. Olawade (2024)	Enhancing mental health with Artificial Intelligence: Current	AI has significant potential in mental healthcare for early detection, personalized treatments, and virtual therapy, but its integration must address

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	trends and future prospects	ethical challenges like privacy, bias, and preserving the human element in therapy.
Dr. Anne Duffy (2023)	Mental Health in University Students: From Evidence to Action	Tracks mental health challenges like adaptation and academic stress using the U-Flourish survey to design targeted programs.
Joanne Deborah Worsley (2022)	Systematic Review of Mental Health Interventions for University Faculty	Recommends mindfulness exercises, peer support, and workplace policy changes to address faculty stress and job insecurity.
Gayle Y. Iwamasa (2024)	Introduction to the Special Issue: Improving Access and Quality of Mental Health Care for Diverse Populations	Discusses innovative solutions like digital platforms and stepped care models to remove barriers like cost and stigma.
Government of India (2014)	National Mental Health Policy	Comprehensive policy for Mental Health in India

Source: Literature survey

From the review of literature review the research gaps that have emerged are as follows:

- There are only a few studies on knowledge institutions and stress related dimensions in them
- Stress is mostly seen from burnout and workload perspective but not much from role related dimensions
- Not many studies in the knowledge institutional context within India
- Many knowledge institutional categories are not covered when it comes to examining stress related dimensions in the Indian context
- The interrelationships between stress and mental health have not been adequately investigated.
- There is only limited mention of deploying Indian Knowledge System (IKS) approaches in mitigating various stresses in knowledge institutions. Even this is largely restricted to yoga and does not mention other IKS approaches

This research study endeavors to bridge a few of the gaps. It seeks to investigate the type of stresses specifically role related in knowledge institutions, existing approaches to mitigate the same and the scope for introducing IKS based strategies.

3.0 Research questions

As mentioned, the research study seeks to answer the research questions as follows:

- Are there stresses other than the usual workload stress faced in knowledge institutions?

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- How do these stresses impact the mental health of knowledge professionals?
- Do knowledge institutions understand the issues involved and have developed support systems?
- What is the scope for introducing IKS based approaches for preventing and reducing the various stresses in knowledge institutions?

4.0 Research objectives

The research study has the following objectives:

- To find out the different kind of role related stresses affecting professionals in knowledge institutions
- To gain insights as to the mental health support systems available in knowledge institutions
- To understand initiatives taken by individuals to handle various role related stresses
- To examine the scope for IKS based support systems to reduce stresses in knowledge institutions and improve mental health of knowledge professionals

5.0 Research design and methodology

The research design was exploratory in nature as this study is an early research endeavor in this direction. It has been proposed to conduct the research in two phases. In the first phase, which was exploratory, a limited survey was undertaken to gain insights and relationships. As existing scales did not meet the requirement, a questionnaire drawing upon different types of role stresses identified by Pestonjee (1987) was designed. In addition, indepth interviews were conducted using a schedule. In the second phase, it is proposed to refine the scale further and conduct the study covering a large sample of knowledge institutions. The Information Requirements Planning (IRP) table for the study is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Information Requirements Planning (IRP)

Source of Information	Primary / Secondary	Information requirements	Possible scales
Knowledge professionals	Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different types of role related stresses ▪ Behavioral aspects of individuals in recent times ▪ Support systems for handling stress and mental health in workplace 	<p>Likert</p> <p>All others nominal</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual engagement in IKS ▪ Institution driven IKS initiatives to reduce stress and mental health 	
HR Managers and strategic level HR professionals	Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding current challenges ▪ Existing support systems ▪ Cultural and organizational practices ▪ Integration of IKS in institutions ▪ Recognition and practices pertaining to mental health in knowledge institutions 	Indepth interviews
Cases of knowledge professionals who faced significant role related stress			Cases. Full details not given to protect privacy. Inferences were blended into research

The choice of knowledge institutions from where knowledge professionals were drawn was based on judgment and those that fitted the definition of HPKIs as per Tushar Shah (2014)'s definition. These included knowledge institutions such as university, management institute, startup in cutting edge technology driven research of confidential nature, education research setup, research institute involved in linguistic research etc. Knowledge professionals at middle and upper middle level were chosen based on judgement as they were prone to role related stresses and dependent on institution driven support systems, Respondents belonged to different genders and hailed from different regions. Indepth interviews focused on upper middle HR managers and very senior HR professionals with understanding of mental health dimensions.

6.0 Data analysis

The data analysis used the zonal classification approach given the exploratory nature of the study and limited sample size.

6.1 Role related stress

Role related stress is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Types of role related stress faced by knowledge professionals

Type of Stress	Question number from the questionnaire	Scores: Total participants: 31 Likert scale: 5 (31*5=155)	Stress percentage (Formula Given Below)	The nature of the stress: Namely low, moderate and high
Role stagnation stress	Positive Questions: Q7: I have opportunities for professional growth in my current role.	118/155	65.96 %	Moderate to high level stress
	Q8: I receive constructive feedback about my performance that helps me grow in my role.	115/155		
	Negative Questions: Q6: I feel stuck in my current role and unable to progress.	84/155		
	Q32: I often find myself wishing for more stimulating or varied tasks in my daily work routine.	92/155		

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Role expectation stress	<p>Positive Questions:</p> <p>Q11: My role is significant in the organization.</p> <p>121/155</p> <p>Q10: I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me in my role.</p> <p>125/155</p> <p>Negative Questions:</p> <p>Q9: I often experience conflicting demands from my organization that make it difficult to perform my job effectively</p> <p>89/155</p>		67.1%	Moderate to high stress levels
Role erosion stress	<p>Positive Questions:</p> <p>Q15: I am part of crucial initiatives in the organization.</p> <p>116/155</p> <p>Q18: I feel motivated in my organization to pursue my professional vision</p> <p>113/155</p> <p>Negative Questions:</p> <p>Q20: I often feel that my contributions to the team or organization go unrecognized.</p> <p>78/155</p>		66.1%	Moderate to high level stress

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Role overload stress	<p>Positive Questions:</p> <p>Q:22-I am frequently required to handle tasks that are of considerable importance to the organization.</p> <p>Negative Questions:</p> <p>Q:5:There is constant pressure to work every minute, with little opportunity to relax</p> <p>Q-21- I often feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks I must complete in my role.</p> <p>Q:23- I often feel pressured to complete tasks within tight deadlines.</p>	<p>113/155</p> <p>59/155</p> <p>65/155</p> <p>52/155</p>	<p>46.1%</p>	<p>Moderate stress</p>
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Role Isolation Stress	<p>Positive</p> <p>Q:19- I find easy to communicate with my colleagues about conflicting expectations</p> <p>112/155</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Q: 24 - I often feel pressured to complete tasks within tight deadlines – Role overload</p> <p>75/155</p> <p>Q:25- I often feel isolated in my role, with limited interaction or connection to other roles within the organization – role isolation</p> <p>80/155</p>		57.4 %	Moderate Stress
Personal Inadequacy	<p>Negative</p> <p>Q:25 - I feel that my colleagues do not reach out to me easily for collaboration or support – Role isolation</p> <p>93/155</p>		This was eliminated in the analyses as it has one question only with regard to this.	
Self-role Distance Stress	<p>Negative</p> <p>Q:28 - I frequently feel that the way I am expected to perform in my role does not resonate with what I believe is important in my work – Self-role distance</p> <p>76/155</p>		50.32%	Moderate Stress

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	<p>Q:29 - I often find myself questioning how well my current role reflects my personal strengths and interests – Self role distance</p> <p>66/155</p>			
	<p>Q:33 - I sometimes feel that the tasks I perform lack a sense of purpose or meaningful impact on my work or organization – Self -role distance</p> <p>92/155</p>			
Role Ambiguity Stress	<p>Positive</p> <p>Q:14 - My role is strongly connected to the mission of the organization</p> <p>124/155</p> <p>Q:16 - I am part of the consultative process in organizational decision making</p> <p>99/155</p> <p>Q:17 - I am aware of the new initiatives in the organization – Role ambiguity</p> <p>113/155</p> <p>Q:30 - I am clear about my role in the organization</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Q:12 - I often feel uncertain about my role and responsibilities within the team</p> <p>124/155</p> <p>Q: 13 - My role is frequently changed in the organization</p> <p>77/155</p>		66%	Moderate to high level stress

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		80/155		
Resource Inadequacy Stress	<p>Negative</p> <p>Q: 27 - I have not received adequate training or support to perform my job responsibilities confidently</p> <p>Q: 31 - I sometimes feel that the tasks I perform lack a sense of purpose or meaningful impact on my work or organization</p>	<p>92/155</p> <p>64/155</p>	50.3%	Moderate Stress
Inter role distance stress	Q 4. I have a lot of responsibility in my job	135/155	This was eliminated in the analyses as it has one question only with regard to this aspect. Also was more a starter question.	

Source: Survey

Note: The highlighted percentages indicate moderate to high levels of these types of stress experienced among knowledge workers.

Interpretation of Stress levels:

1-40% - Low stress

41-65% - Low to Moderate level stress

65-100% - Moderate to high level stress

The table above depicts the different types of stress and their respective percentages, and some of them are excluded from analysis as the items in that section were very limited and analysis would not be a possibility in these cases. The total number of respondents in this pilot questionnaire were 31, and the scale on which the questionnaire was designed was a 5-point Likert scale.

Adding the response of each respondent of each of the questions, it would add upto 155, which would be the maximum score, indicated above. Some of these dimensions have both positive and negative questions, and the negative questions were scored through reverse scoring method to standardize it with the positive ones.

From the analysis table, there are certain types of stress that need assistance immediately and these would be termed as, ‘concern areas’. The main concern areas are the following: (a) **Role stagnation stress** - 65.96 %, (b) **Role expectation stress** - 67.1%, (c) **Role erosion stress** - 66.1%, (d) **Role Ambiguity Stress**- 66% (e) **Role Isolation Stress**- 57.4%. It is not to misunderstand that the other stress types are not relevant, but in the knowledge creation and dissemination point of view, these stress types which have a higher scoring, need to be taken into consideration and appropriate measures needs to be taken.

With regard to these appropriate measures, the question of why studying these different types of stress in knowledge institutions becomes an important aspect. Organizational stress as mentioned earlier in the study by Pestonjee, (1987), more so in the context of knowledge institutions they are different). It becomes an issue of concern as well, as most knowledge professionals spend considerable amount of time in these institutions, and health hazards and problems are inevitable in these cases. Stress, which is common in organizations, becomes a part of later health issues, and sometimes is a cause for health problems, ranging from physical issues such as severe heartburn, to mental issues of depressive symptoms (Sonnetag.and Frese.M, 2003).

Keeping this in mind, the questionnaire captured some of the mental and physical health aspects of these types of stress, and it is given as follows in Table 4:

6.2 Knowledge Workers and Health:

Question: Which of the following statements best describe your feelings or behaviors over the past six months:

Table 4: Feelings/ Behaviours in the past six months

Statement	Percentage
I often feel anxious or on edge.	19.35
I struggle with feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem.	19.31
I experience tension or stress in my daily life.	45.16
I find it difficult to stay motivated to complete tasks.	22.5

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I frequently feel fatigued or lacking in energy	25.80
I tend to avoid social interactions or gatherings	16.12
I have been indulging in drinking alcohol more than usual	-
I have been smoking or using tobacco products more frequently	-
Other:	25.80

Source: Survey

6.3 Issues faced in workplace are given in Table 5.

Question: I face the following issues in the context of work

Table 5: Issues faced in workplace

Statement	Percentage
Worried about future	32.25
Feel like applying for leave often or taking offs frequently	6.45
Always fatigued or low energy levels	16.12
Have health issues / low resistance to sickness	9.67
Feel like quitting my job	19.35
Low motivation to achieve professional goals	19.35
Getting angry and furious	16.12
Have negative feelings internally	22.5

Source: Survey

The above table gives insights into how employees in knowledge organizations feel about their work and these statements are in relation to physical and mental issues that one faces during their time in and outside the organization. It is not to say that work only is a causing factor of these issues, but work is also involved in it. The highest among these is the tension and stress that one faces, which adds up to 45.16 percentage of the 31 respondents. Apart from this, the second table shows a high percentage

among individuals in terms of having negative feelings about oneself, in the context of their work, which is 22.5%, being the highest among employees of knowledge institutions. Along with that health issues, feelings of quitting and lack of motivation (anhedonia), also take vital roles in increasing the risk of the different types of stress among knowledge workers.

This is a significant finding that the workspace is an important indicator of physical and mental issues faced by the employees, and drastic changes and measures need to be taken in this direction.

6.4 Support systems available

The study also probed into support systems available in the institution to cope with mental health issues. The same is given in Table 6

Table 6: Support systems available (top 5)

Option	Percentage of Total Responses
Access to counsellors	10.3
Support from Reporting Officers in reducing stress	20.7
Support from HR department in reducing stress	24.1
Support from colleagues in reducing stress	48.3
Club activities in which I participate	6.9
Easy access to top management to find help	13.8
No support system	13.8

Source: Survey

6.5 Current engagement with IKS

The study sought to understand current engagement with IKS to reduce stress and improve mental health. The same is given in Table 7

Table 7: Current engagement with IKS

Activity	Percentage
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Practicing Yoga	44.4
Participating in Indian art forms (e.g., Bharatanatyam, Kathak)	11.1
Creating or appreciating Indian paintings (such as Mandala art etc)	16.7
Engaging in traditional music or dance	27.8
Studying ancient Indian texts or philosophies	50.0
Participating in meditation or mindfulness practices	44.4
Attending workshops or classes related to Indian culture and arts	61.1
Spiritual reading sessions	55.6
Chanting	33.3
Attending Pravachans and discourses	27.8
Participating in Shramadana (community service)	22.2
Joining Satsangs (spiritual gatherings)	27.8
Participating in cultural festivities	22.2
Creating cultural groups within small communities	5.6

Other	5.6
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Source: Survey

Analysis

According to the table as above, the results show that the most popular activities participants regularly engage in related to Indian Knowledge Systems are workshops or classes on Indian culture and arts, which attract the interest of 61.1% of the respondents, spiritual reading sessions by 55.6% of the respondents, and yoga and meditation by 44.4% of the respondents each. Additionally, 50% of respondents study ancient texts, indicating an intellectual connection with Indian traditions. Activities like creating cultural groups, selected by 5.6% of the employees, and other unspecified activities by 5.6% are the least engaged, suggesting limited interest in community-based initiatives. In conclusion, the data reveals that participants are most involved in personal and structured activities such as workshops, yoga, and spiritual reading. In contrast, group-based activities are less popular.

6.6 Interest in workplace related IKS activities

The study also sought to gain insights into workplace-organized activities related to IKS. The same is given in Table 8

**Table 8: Interest in Workplace-Organized Activities
related to Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)**

Activity	Percentage
Practicing Yoga	55.6
Participating in Indian art forms (e.g., Bharatanatyam, Kathak)	22.2
Creating or appreciating Indian paintings (such as Mandala Art, etc.)	33.3
Engaging in traditional music or dance	44.4

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Studying ancient Indian texts or philosophies	50.0
Participating in meditation or mindfulness practices	55.6
Attending workshops or classes related to Indian culture and arts	66.7
Spiritual reading sessions	61.1
Chanting	38.9
Attending Pravachans and discourses	33.3
Participating in Shramadana (community service)	27.8
Joining Satsangs (spiritual gatherings)	38.9
Participating in cultural festivities	27.8
Creating cultural groups within small communities	11.1
Practicing Indian Martial Art forms such as Kalari, Varmam, etc.	16.7

Source: Survey

Analysis

According to the table above, the results indicate that workshops or classes related to Indian culture and arts are the most preferred activities by the employees at the workspace in the future, capturing interest from 66.7% of respondents. Additionally, spiritual reading sessions are chosen by 61.1% of participants. Yoga and meditation each attract interest from 55.6% of the individuals surveyed.

Further, traditional music and dance have moderate appeal, with 44.4% of respondents expressing interest. Chanting and satsangs received support from 38.9% of participants. In contrast, martial arts attracted minimal interest, with only 16.7% showing preference, and cultural groups received the least support, at 11.1%.

In summary, the data indicates a strong preference for workshops, yoga, and spiritual reading activities, while there is comparatively less enthusiasm for specialized or community-focused options.

7.0 Analysis of indepth interviews and cases

Indepth interview of HR professionals were undertaken as part of this study. Being accepted by peers and the institution was a major source of stress leading to negative impacts on psychological health in knowledge institutions. While personal inadequacy due to lack of skills requiring upgrading was also a stress, this was more in the short-term, recognition related role stress was a long term one. Role expectation stress was faced mainly in the entry level, causes being personal financial dimensions as also the need to perform non-routine tasks. Role isolation was also there in talented knowledge professionals. This is due to the nature of knowledge institutions which offered scope for self-actualization (which could manifest as arrogance also sometimes). Role erosion was also encountered as knowledge institutions constantly modified and reassigned responsibilities. Middle level knowledge professionals also faced personal inadequacy stress stemming from role ambiguity. Resource inadequacy stress was also there as institutional structures operated in silos and knowledge professionals were required to excel with average inputs and resources.

Presently the support systems for mental health issues stemming from role related stresses are very poor or absent in knowledge institutions. A more evolved HRM is the need of the hour in HPKIs. There is a need to bring in HR professionals who have had exposure to knowledge institution culture. Constant monitoring and interventions are required by divisional heads for mental health issues of knowledge professionals but most divisional heads and even top management in quite a few knowledge institutions are neither aware nor equipped in this direction according to HR professionals. Industry bodies have discussions on these dimensions constantly, but implementation has been tardy. Hierarchy in knowledge institutions is a barrier in enhancing mental health support resources. Documentation of successful case studies of implementation of mental health support systems for knowledge professionals to reduce their stress and enhance their mental well being is pertinent. Mere implementation of IKS is not adequate but mapping IKS initiatives to specific role stresses and mental health dimensions is very relevant.

The above are a few findings that emerged from indepth interviews with HR professionals.

Case situations (not indicated in full to protect privacy) also gave insights. In one knowledge institution a very highly qualified knowledge professional who did very well in the initial years, winning awards for research had to face role erosion, role stagnation after the change of CEO. In another situation, a highly qualified professional faced repeated role erosion, and role ambiguity. In another situation, an

academically very successful professional had to face constant criticism from superiors for making no mistake and was made to feel inadequate leading to low self-esteem. It is important that before anyone is nominated to leadership positions in knowledge institutions they ought to be trained in such dimensions, a practice seen in large corporate firms. It is not enough for top management to outline a vision but also to be aware of structural impediments down the line and creating appropriate roles for knowledge professionals is also important. The above case situations highlight the role of leadership to ensure that there was no role related stress, and the mental well-being of professional were addressed in HPKIs.

8.0 Conclusions

There are interesting conclusions emerging from this limited exploratory study. In knowledge institutions due to their very nature different role related stresses were encountered by knowledge professionals. These included Role stagnation stress, Role expectation stress, Role erosion stress, Role Ambiguity Stress, Role Isolation Stress. These were also the important concerns. Anxiety about the future is an important issue that impacts mental wellbeing in knowledge institutions as per the limited study. Existing support systems in institutions are found to be grossly inadequate. While yoga has been a popular IKS intervention, there is a need to match different types of stress and allied mental health issues to specific IKS issues. Human resources teams have to evolve to develop systems to prevent mental health issues in knowledge organizations. Mapping IKS initiatives to specific stress and allied mental health issues is critical for better impact. The study identified that leadership and divisional heads of knowledge institutions ought to be exposed to such dimensions to enable the institutions to be High Performance Knowledge Institutions.

9.0 Limitations

The following are the limitations of the study

- The study was exploratory. Sample size is small. However, this is likely to be addressed in the second phase of the study.
- The choice of institutions and knowledge professionals for survey was based on judgement.
- There is a need to develop a scale systematically given the context of the study.
- There is a need to look at different types of knowledge professionals at various levels of hierarchy and gender across institutions.
- It is important to interview more HR professionals and strategic decision-makers
- It is relevant to examine more cases of knowledge professionals who faced stress induced mental health issues and their coping mechanisms

10 Directions for future research

The following are the possible directions for future research

There is a need to undertake a deeper and larger study in the second phase with more knowledge institutions across different categories. There is a need to design an appropriate scale for the study given the context of HPKIs. Successful cases of IKS implementation in knowledge institutions ought to be documented. In addition, there is scope for applying strategic management frameworks to examine implementation of mental health policy in the context knowledge intensive sectors.

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