In the current global work environment, all global companies are focused on retaining the talent and knowledge held by the workforce. All companies are focused on lowering the employee turnover and preserving knowledge. HR departments also strive to offer benefits that will appeal to workers, thus reducing the risk of losing knowledge. Stress management is an innovative issue in modern organisations. Organisations are striving for reducing occupational stress and improving job satisfaction particularly in IT field. Stress is a multi-dimensional concept. It often occurs when individuals’ physical and emotional position do not match with their job demands, constraints or opportunities. This study help to find out how prevalent is the stress among managers and executives. It also exposes the major sources of stress among managers and executives. Finally, it will highlight the factors responsible for the stress dimensions contributing to stress in the industry. Normative survey method was adopted by the investigators for conducting the present study. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that results when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases. Primary data were collected from 60 respondents (including 22 managers and 38 executives) from 10 various IT companies located in Ernakulam district through random sampling using questionnaire. This study attempts to identify the sources of stress and its prevalence among employees in the IT industry in Ernakulam district. With the expansion of technology more people have accepted technology related areas as their working field. Studies prove that the work related stress is comparatively more in these fields because of fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to uncertain economy, and increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks.
1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a relatively new approach to managing people in any organization. People are considered the key resource in this approach. It is concerned with the people dimension in the management of an organization. Since an organization is a body of people, their acquisition, development of skills, motivation for higher levels of attainments, as well as ensuring maintenance of their level of commitment are all significant activities. These activities fall in the domain of HR Occupational stress is occurred due to the nature of work, modified by the perceptions of the individual worker and it is a psychological with organizational and economic ramifications. The environmental factors which are considered as stressors include objective conditions, such as overtime, shift work, unemployment and subjective job attitudes such as overload, role conflict, role ambiguity etc. Occupational stress is identified as an important contributor of many health issues including psychological, physiological and behavioral problems.

According to Cooper and Sutherland (1980) among the six major categories of stress five are concerned with occupational stress. These include:

- Stress in the job itself
- Role based stress
- Interpersonal relationships
- Career development
- Organizational structure and climate

1.1 The Indian IT Industry

Information Technology (IT) industry in India is one of the fastest growing industries. Indian IT industry has built up valuable brand equity for itself in the global markets. IT industry in India comprises of software industry and information technology enabled services (ITES), which also includes business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. India is considered as a pioneer in software development and a favourite destination for IT-enabled services. The origin of IT industry in India can be traced to 1974, when the mainframe manufacturer, Burroughs, asked its India sales agent, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), to export programmers for installing system software for a U.S. client. The IT industry originated under unfavorable conditions. Local markets were absent and government policy toward private enterprise was hostile. Today, Indian IT companies such as Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro, Infosys, and HCL et al are renowned in the global market for their IT process.

1.2 Need and Significance of the Study

The Indian IT industry has been steering the growth of the Indian economy in the past one decade unlike any other industry by generating jobs, pushing up exports, increasing FDI, creating wealth, and thereby boosting the foreign reserves. This sterling performance of the IT industry was largely on account of its human resources. This industry has also been much affected by the pervasive forces of globalization and by the persistent growth of information technology. These changes have in turn affected the way firms compete and specifically the way they are managed. The increased complexity of global competition...
have exerted tremendous pressure on workers and thus imposed considerable stress on them. Thus, job stress becomes a common problem faced by employees in many organizations today. It affects employee’s mental and physical health and in the long run affects company’s performance. This study attempts to identify the sources of stress and its prevalence among employees in the IT industry in Ernakulum district. With the expansion of technology more people have accepted technology related areas as their working field. Studies prove that the work related stress is comparatively more in these fields because of fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to uncertain economy, and increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks. Economic factors that employees are facing in the 21st century have been linked to increased stress levels. Researchers and social commentators have pointed out that the computer and communications revolutions have made companies more efficient and productive than ever before. This boom in productivity however has caused higher expectations and greater competition, putting more stress on the employees.

Stress is a fact of everyday life and studies indicate that mild levels of stress actually facilitate efficiency probably because they help us to mobilize our energy and resource and motivate us to do our best. But today’s changing and competitive environment increases stress level of both workers and the managers. Even though the pay offered is more, employees find it difficult to manage the stress faced by them. Stress should not be too high or too low. An optimum level of stress is beneficial. Too low and too high stress reduces productivity and increases pressure to the management. As human beings are put in hectic conditions at times, stress is unavoidable. In this context it is highly desirable to conduct a study on occupational stress of IT employees.

1.3 Scope Of The Study
This topic has much relevance in the present era of global economic recession. Job redundancy, job failures, dropouts are very common terms in Indian IT industry today. Night shifts, 24/7 work timings, work pressure etc made the IT field more complex. Here the investigator tries to throw light on the dimensions of stress, the nature and extent of stress and tries to suggest some measures for overcoming this.

1.4 Statement of the problem
The above discussion has made the investigators to choose the problem which is stated as “A Study on Occupational Stress of It Employees with Special Reference to Ernakulum District”.

1.5 Operational definition of key terms
- **Occupational Stress**

Stress has been defined in a number of ways, but one of the leading and most useful definitions was presented by McGrath (1970) who defined stress as a “substantial imbalance between environmental demand and response capability of the organism”. Occupational stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their occupation and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.
IT employees
IT employee means one who is employed in the IT enabled services for salary or on a contract basis by a business house or by government.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
The objectives of the study are:
I. To find out the socio demographic variable of the respondents
II. To identify how prevalent is the stress among managers and executives
III. To study the major sources of stress among managers and executives
IV. To find the stress dimensions contributing to stress in the industry

3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Present study has the following limitations:-
- Study is mainly based on primary data collected from field source. Hence study suffers from the inherent limitations of survey data.
- Only employees working in Ernakulum District are included, others are excluded from study.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
- Method adopted for the study
Normative survey method was adopted by the investigators for conducting the present study. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that results when data are abstracted from a number of individual cases. It is essentially cross sectional.

- Procedure of data collection
Primary data were collected from 60 respondents (including 22 managers and 38 executives) from 10 various IT companies located in Ernakulum district through random sampling using questionnaire.

- Statistical techniques used
Simple percentage method, mean, Standard deviation and multiple regression analysis are used for the study.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
Objective 1: To find out the socio demographic variable of the respondent
Profile of Respondents
Most of the respondents are in the age group of 31 to 40 (34%) and 41 to 50 (31%). Among the respondents, the highest gender group is male which stands at 60.4% compared to female at 29.6%. On the ethnicity, 64.2% of the respondents are post graduates compared to graduate 26.4%. Further, most of the respondents are married with or without children. The total married respondent stands at 58.50% (Married without children at 13.2% and married with children at 45.3%, this total up to 58.5%) Majority at
least 10 years of working experience (at 35.8%) and at least 3 to 6 years of length of services in the same company.

**Objective 2: To identify how prevalent is the stress among managers and executives**

Table 1: Respondents’ feeling of present job stressfulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from field survey

Table 1 illustrates that 41.51% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree. However, by comparing the two total figures of agreement and disagreement, we noticed the overall perception of stress is high (35.9% agree that job is stressful compared to 22.7% disagreement.)

**Objective 3: To study the major sources of stress among managers and executives**

**Sources of Stress**

Table No 2 shows the “Unrealistic objectives” have a higher mean score of 3.29 followed by “Incompetent boss” at 3.21 and “time pressure and deadline” at 3.21. The high mean scores reflected negative perceptions and thus these are the main sources of stress to the respondents in the organization. All other factors of stress have a score value ranging from 2.89-3.11 which effects negativity. Competition among organizations requires every firm to pursue innovations and find new technology, and thus necessitate management to construct new planning and improve objectives. Sometimes, the changes could be unrealistic. These changes can make the current employee skills and experiences obsolete in short time and thus this innovation is a threat to many people and causes them stress. There is also the issue of organization leadership which represents the managerial style of organization’s senior executives. Some leaders do not acquire the expertise, skills, or the right knowledge to assist them in making good decisions. This could create cultures of fear, anxiety and tension among the subordinates and consequently, stress. There is also the issue of task and role demands of the organization on the personal job. It includes design of individual job, working conditions and the physical work layout. An excessive demand causes stress to worker. At times, individual is given more jobs than he or she can perform.

**Table 2: Sources of stress**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrealistic objectives</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 4: To find the stress dimensions contributing to stress in the industry

Predictors of Stress

The stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to test the relationship of overall stress level as dependent variables and the job and organizational climate characteristics as the independent variables. From the analysis as shown in table no.3 only 5 dimensions have been entered into the regression equation. They are adaptability, job security, conflict, support and integrity. These 5 dimensions explained the variability in the overall stress level of employees. Nevertheless, by looking at the R-square value, all these factors when taken into consideration explained 25.7% of the variability in the level of stress.

### Table 3: Predictor for Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors of stress</th>
<th>Sig*</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Integrity</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>-0.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Conflict</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Job security</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Adaptability</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Support</td>
<td>0.039</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05

From Table No 3, it can be concluded that stress are inversely related to integrity (Beta= -0.441) and positively related to conflict (Beta=0.229), to job security (Beta=0.320), adaptability (Beta=0.218) and support (Beta=0.161). Beta value closest to one would present the strongest correlation. In this study, Beta for stress relationship with integrity is negative, which implies that as integrity increases, stress would be reduced. Other predictors however, have lower correlation with stress.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

i.) Organize a Stress Management Program that focuses on different leave categories of employee’s at all hierarchical level.

ii.) Take adequate steps to redesign jobs, which are taxing to employees’ abilities and capacities.

iii.) Adequate role clarification to be made whenever necessary to eliminate role ambiguity.

iv.) Introduce more job oriented training programs, which improve employees’ skill and their confidence to work effectively.
v.) Encourage open channel of communication to deal work related stress.
vi.) Undertake stress audit at all levels in the organization to identify stress area improving conditions of job and alleviating job stress.

vii.) Introduce ‘Pranayama’ (Brain Stilling and control of Vital Force) as a holistic managerial strategy to deal with occupational strategy.

6. CONCLUSION
The research objective of the study was to provide an insight of the causes of stress among employees in the IT industries in Ernakulum district. Overall the study indicated that 35.85% of the respondents feel they are stressful at work. The main sources of stress were unrealistic objectives, the issue of incompetent boss, time pressure and deadlines. From the study, the five major predictor of stressors found in the BPO industries are support, adaptability, job security, conflict, and integrity. These are all the potential elements affecting job stress. In addition, integrity has an inverse relationship and highest correlation with stress. In order to stay competitive and cost effective, the management in the BPO industry has to be sensitive towards employee’s perception. In the era of hyper competitiveness, every effort should be made to maximize our resources in order to stay competitive. On the societal level, there is a need to make society and organization more humane and caring. More emphasis should be on fitting organizations to people and not the other way round. Company should provide greater economic security, and psychological security in the form of training in survival skills in today’s fast-changing society. It is hoped that the findings of this study are able to create awareness as well as help companies develop strategies for the development of their human resources.

7. REFERENCES