



Occupational Stress And Mental Well-Being Of Truck Drivers In Indian Logistics: A Case Study Of Exim Logistics

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Abstract: In India the logistics sector depends mainly on its truck drivers—individuals, who work long hours under often difficult and stressful conditions. This study explores the occupational stress and mental well-being of truck drivers at Exim Logistics, a logistics company operating across eastern and central India.

We have conducted necessary surveys and interviews with 75 drivers, we also examined the sources of stress continuing with them, impact of stress on their personal and professional lives. It is observed Exim's interventions like health camps and family-focused programs. Our overall experience and results show improved retention reduced stress-related absenteeism and better confidence. Observations taken on how HR-led strategies can make a meaningful difference

Index Terms - occupational stress, truck drivers, mental health, Indian logistics, Exim Logistics, employee wellness, HR practices

1. INTRODUCTION

India's logistics industry is the backbone of its supply chain and contributes nearly 14% to the country's GDP. At the Centre of this massive sector are the truck drivers who move over 60% of goods across highways, cities, and rural belts. Yet, their daily work often includes harsh realities: fatigue, isolation, long absences from family, irregular sleep, and lack of proper health facilities.

Exim Logistics Private Limited, based in Odisha, is a mid-sized but rapidly growing logistics firm that serves mining, manufacturing, and infrastructure sectors. With over 300 trucks and a strong presence in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, the company follows ISO 9001, ISO 45001, and ISO 14001 standards. The company is recognized for its commitment to environmental safety, quality assurance, and operational efficiency.

Established in 2012, Exim Logistics has grown steadily over the past decade by embracing technology, sustainable practices, and driver-centric policies. The company specializes in multi-modal logistics, heavy haulage, last-mile delivery, and just-in-time (JIT) transportation. It serves clients in steel, aluminum, cement, and power sectors.

Exim Logistics has also implemented several internal digital systems for real-time tracking, route optimization, driver performance monitoring, and incident management. Through a dedicated HR cell and wellness department, it actively supports employee needs across health, safety, and social inclusion.

Ethical Culture at Exim Logistics

Exim Logistics strongly adheres to ethical business practices and regulatory compliance. The company has implemented an internal code of conduct that emphasizes respect for individuals, transparency, and zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or harassment. Employee grievances are addressed swiftly through a structured redressal mechanism. Besides Exim maintains certifications for quality (ISO 9001), occupational health and safety (ISO 45001), and environmental management (ISO 14001), ensuring ethical and responsible operations.

Employees of Exim logistics are educated regularly about the company's ethical guidelines through onboarding programs, consistent workshops, and bulletin updates. Ethical compliance is regularly monitored by the HR and audit teams to uphold accountability across all departments. The leadership at Exim believes that fostering an ethical culture not only supports employee morale but also enhances customer trust and long-term sustainability.

Exim also promotes fair treatment and equality, especially for field workers and drivers, by ensuring timely wages, safe working conditions, and a non-discriminatory environment. CSR activities focused on community engagement and driver families add to the ethical and social fabric of the company.

This case study looks at how Exim has taken deliberate steps to address the occupational stress faced by its drivers and promote mental and social well-being. The study focuses on their experiences, voices, and the results of HR-led wellness initiatives.

2. Literature Review

Research on truck driver well-being in India is still emerging but growing steadily. Studies such as Sharma et al. (2020) show that stress among drivers is linked to irregular work hours, lack of rest, unsafe driving conditions, and poor diet. Drivers also experience emotional issues like loneliness and anxiety due to long stretches away from home.

Karasek and Theorell's Job Demand-Control-Support Model suggests that stress is manageable when employees feel supported and have some control over their routines. In logistics, this translates to giving drivers better planning, access to facilities, and listening to their feedback.

Singh (2021) further notes that companies which proactively conduct health camps, involve families in events, or address emotional concerns see better retention and loyalty. Exim's approach falls in line with this growing body of knowledge, offering real-world validation.

3. Methodology

The research used a combination of survey data, interviews, and internal company records.

3.1 Data Collection

- 75 drivers completed a survey with 20 structured questions.
- 20 drivers participated in semi-structured interviews.
- Study conducted between January and March 2025.

3.2 Demographic Profile

- Age: Average 38.4 years (range 25–52)
- Experience: Avg. 9.7 years
- Education: 78% up to 10th grade, 15% 12th, 7% no formal schooling
- Marital Status: 82% married
- Trips/Month: Average 12.3

3.3 Tools Used

- SPSS for survey analysis
- NVivo for qualitative data
- Ethical clearance from Exim's HR board was secured.

4. Findings

4.1 Working Conditions & Stress

- Weekly hours: Down from 62.5 to 58.7 hours due to better route planning.
- Rest per trip: Increased to 5.1 hours from 4.2 in 2023.
- Stress levels: 56% reported moderate or manageable stress.

4.2 Health & Support

- 71% attended at least one health camp.
- 68% were aware of their ESI/insurance coverage.
- 60% reported better health in the last year.
- 62% satisfied with HR response time and support.

4.3 Social & Family Life

- 48% felt disconnected from family during long trips.
- 52% appreciated family meet-ups organized by Exim.
- 35% built friendships at rest stops; 20% felt lonely on the road.
- Attendance in family events grew from 40% (2023) to 60% (2024).

5 Discussion

The results show that simple but consistent efforts—like listening to drivers, organizing family programs, and offering health check-ups—can lead to real improvements in both retention and morale. Exim's family-first policies, such as involving spouses in award events or hosting get-togethers, made drivers feel seen and appreciated.

Stress reduction wasn't only emotional; it translated into 12% fewer sick leaves and a 15% increase in driver retention from 2023 to 2024.

However, challenges remain. About 20% still reported loneliness, and some drivers mentioned needing more rest zones, especially on night routes. Also, mental health remains a topic many feel hesitant to discuss openly.

6 Recommendations

To build on current progress, Exim could:

- Install more highway rest points in collaboration with partners.
- Introduce a multilingual mobile app for drivers with wellness, HR support, and navigation tools.
- Create a peer buddy system where senior drivers support newer ones.
- To train drivers on mental health first aid and open up anonymous counselling options.
- Double family events annually and add virtual calls from trucks.
- Set up a driver helpline to quickly address logistics or personal emergencies.

7 Conclusion

Truck drivers form the lifeline of Indian logistics, and their well-being must be a priority—not just for ethical reasons, but for operational efficiency. Exim Logistics has shown that a company of modest size can still lead with strong values. Health camps, Yoga Pranayama camps, flexible planning, HR responsiveness, and social inclusion are not luxuries—they're necessities in a sector that depends on people more than machines. As logistics grows in India, Exim's model offers a hopeful and replicable template for other companies to follow.

8. References

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