

# Workplace Stress and Mental Health during Covid

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***Abstract: Stress has become part of human's life due to the various internal and external expectations placed upon their shoulders. To understand the sources and impact of workplace stress in order to derive adequate and efficient intervention strategies to improve mental health of employees working in E.I.D Parry (India) Limited. The study employed a quantitative research design where participants were screened using Stress Scale (Rajendran& Kaliappan, 1991). Stress adversely affects their mental health among the employees. Understanding the sources of stress would facilitate the development of effective counselling modules and intervention strategies by school psychologists and counsellors in order to help students alleviate stress.***

***Keywords: Stress, employees, workplace stress, mental health.***

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian community is concerned about Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and its long-term consequences. It is going to impact various spheres of life such as the economy, industries, global market, agriculture, human health, health care, etc. At present, the focus of World Health Organization (WHO) is on controlling and mitigating the impact of this pandemic by identifying, testing, treating infected people, developing drugs, vaccines and treatment protocols. Stress management defines stress precisely as a person's physiological response to an internal or external stimulus that triggers the "fight-or-flight" reaction. All workers in the business world no matter what their position, experience stress. Stress is the body's reaction to any demand placed on it, and health experts agree that some stress is essential for human survival. As demands are placed on a person's body, there will be some kind of automatic reaction. When this reaction is positive, the stress helps individuals perform their jobs better. Positive stress, called eustress, can lead individuals to a new awareness of their abilities and a completely new perspective on their jobs. Negative stress, called distress, upsets individuals and can make them physically sick. It can lead to feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression, which may lead to a number of medical problems, including stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and ulcers.

When jobs are too boring or employees are not challenged to use their abilities, stress occurs. Stress also results from undesirable physical working conditions. Employees experience stress when the work environment is too noisy, too hot, too cold or too crowded.

Psychological aspect- Perception and interpretation of event or situation.

Psychological aspect-

- a) More secretions from pituitary adrenaline.
- b) Increase in perspiration rate, heart beat rate.
- c) Heightening of sense

### **Review of Literature:**

Lee & Larson (2000) explain this workplace stress as an interaction between environmental stressors, employee's appraisal and reactions for the same. It has now become a grave reality that is termed as a "career stopper" (Kadapatti & Vijayalaxmi, 2012). It has become a significant cause of concern as it is symptomatic of rising mental health concerns in India (Nadamuri & Ch, 2011). Gupta & Adhikari (2008) explained about the stress associated in two terms as 'role demand' and 'role performance'. They concluded as a role expectation conflict, inter-role distance and role overload were the highest contributing factors that caused stress. The two types of physiological impacts of stress were found to be in greater extent. (Abramson, 2020; Chandra, 2020). Total lockdowns around the cities have led to an increase in cases of stressful work for women during quarantine. Loiwal, (2020). The survey taken by the Indian Psychiatric Society shows a 20 percent increase in mental illnesses since the coronavirus outbreak in India Psychologists and mental health professionals. Yao et al., (2020), close symptoms likely to the increase of depression, suicide, and Self-harm. Jayakumar, (2020), survey as in India, many outlets of alcohol were closed during Covid which affects the mental health of those addicts of alcohol.

### **Research Gap and Contribution of Present Study:**

In fact, every industry has its own unique set of problems and sources of stress, and stress should be necessarily reduced. The present study about workplace stress management in E.I.D. sugar mills will help to increase the employee's efficiency and organizational effectiveness by knowing major factors that are causing stress in their job and suggesting them to cope by adopting suitable stress management techniques. Previous studies of stress management were focused on employees in banks, educational institutions and entrepreneurs, which reveal stress factors in their corresponding areas. There are not many studies undertaken in sugar mills regarding stress management in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Hence the present study was undertaken.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To assess the impact of stress on the behavioral changes of employees during working hours.
- To assess the way in which the organization is implementing to reduce the stress among the employees.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The intent of the study is to explore the workplace stress factors among the employees in the E.I.D. sugar mills in Tamil Nadu. A pretested questionnaire was administered to collect the opinion of the respondents.

### **Research Design:**

This is an empirical study based on survey method. In this study, the researcher used ex post facto research design for identifying causes and impact of stress among employees in the

E.I.D. sugar mills at present condition. The prediction of study factor is not attempted by using the present research design.

#### **Data**

The questionnaires method circulated among employees of EID Parry's Pvt.Ltd. Company both in Tamil and English, were prepared to collect the data from Cane Inspectors and Cane Officers respectively. The secondary data were collected from sources such as official records, research papers, conference reports, books, journals, newspapers, magazines and websites

#### **Reliability Test**

Cronbach alpha reliability test was applied and the result was relatively high at 0.77. Therefore, it was found that the questionnaire used for assessing stress symptoms, health problems was reliable.

#### **Limitation of the study**

As the sample size is very small we cannot generalize the result, it will be applicable only to that particular organization where study has been conducted. Time taken to fill the questionnaire was very short and was decided by the Management. Moreover the questionnaire consists of sensitive issues. We may not rely on the Response. The result derived from the sample may not be representative of the Population from which it is drawn. Moreover the questionnaire consists of sensitive issues. We cannot rely on the Response. The findings are substantially based on the information given by the respondents, the research perhaps have no checks or control over it. Employees were in different locations.

#### **Research Hypothesis:**

The following hypotheses were framed in the study:

H1: The workplace stress significant difference among education groups;

H2: The workplace stress significant difference among age groups;

H3: The workplace stress significant difference between Cane Officers and Cane Inspectors;

H4: The mental health significant difference among experience groups;

H5: The mental health significant difference between marital status of respondents;

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Out of 100 respondents 18.8 per cent of the respondents are Cane Officers and 81.2 per cent are Cane Inspectors. The dominant age group among the respondents is 36 to 45 years, which constitutes 34.8 per cent of the total population. It is followed by 46 to 55 years age group, which constitutes 27 per cent. It is observed that 31.8 per cent of the total respondents hold Bachelor's degree, which is followed by 28.2 per cent with School level education. 26.1 per cent of the respondents have experience of more than 20 years while 23.9 per cent have 11 to 15 years of experience. 40 per cent of the respondents earn a monthly income of Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 10 000. It is followed by the monthly income group of Rs. 10, 001 to Rs. 15, 00 that constitutes 39.1 per cent. 88.8 per cent of the respondents are married. The dominant family type among the total respondents is nuclear family, which constitutes 68.5 per cent, and the respondents from joint family constitute 31.5 per cent. 60.9 per cent of the respondents have less than 4 dependents in their family. It is followed by the respondents with 4 to 5 dependents, which constitute 36.4 per cent.

Table.1:Shows the results after the chi-square test:

Hypothesis No.	Null Hypotheses	Accepted/Rejected	Significant/Not Significant
H1	The workplace stress do not differ significantly among different education groups	Accepted (F - ratio value =2.345, Table value= 2.399)	Not Significant
H2	The workplace stress do not differ significantly among different age groups;	Rejected(F - ratio value =3.353, Table value= 3.327)	Not Significant
H3	The workplace stress do not differ significantly between Cane Officers and Cane Inspectors;	Accepted (F - ratio value =2.345, Table value= 2.399)	Not Significant
H4	The mental health do not differ significantly among different experience groups.	Rejected (F - ratio value =4.340, Table value= 3.377)	Significant
H5	The mental health do not differ significantly between marital status of respondents.	Accepted (F - ratio value =2.345, Table value= 2.399).	Significant

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

- ❖ It is found that **35%** of respondents agree that work condition is in stress, **20%** are neutral and **22%** disagree.
- ❖ It is found that 35% of respondents disagree that have stress at my work place, 26% are neutral and 19% is agree.
- ❖ It is found that 50% of respondents agree that counseling reduce stress, 25% are strongly agree and 15% neutral.
- ❖ It is found that 65% of respondents agree stress will change the behavior, 25% are neutral and 10% strongly agree.

## SUGGESTIONS

Giving tour package once in Three months among each department can increase the morale among employees. Arranging some useful events in organization. Rearranging seating order once in three months. The environment should be in eco-friendly. Employees are to be rewarded to reduce their work stress. Many Case studies, Responsibilities, Counseling can be discussed with the management of the companies.

## 4. CONCLUSION:

The large number of different stress-management techniques coupled with the wide range of health outcome measures used in stress intervention studies makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the efficacy of each technique and each outcome. Also, the quality of the methodology varied substantially among studies. Nevertheless, the most positive results across the various health outcomes were obtained with a combination of two or more

techniques. None of the stress interventions was consistently effective in producing effects on job/organization-relevant outcomes, such as absenteeism or job satisfaction. To produce changes on these types of measures, stress interventions will need to alter or modify the sources of stress in the work environment. It can be said that stress management in work settings can be effective in enhancing worker physical and psychologic health, but the choice of which stress-management technique to use should be based on the specific health outcomes that are targeted for change. Opportunities to monitor psychosocial needs and deliver support during direct employees in workplace, at home or in hospital encounters in clinical practice are greatly curtailed in this crisis by large-scale home confinement.

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