

# **STRESS MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF NORTH EAST INDIA WITH SPECIAL REF TO FACULTY**

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**Abstract :** Organisation is made of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore organisational effectiveness depends on the behaviour and performance of the people constituting organisation. It may sound platitudinous but is nevertheless true that a country that wants to make economic progress must be wedded to the doctrine of the organisational growth. Without it economic progress is not possible. However, much organisational development is cherished and achieved; various complex problems do arise in the field of the employees as a result of group dynamics, such as group behaviour, team building, organisational conflicts and negotiation, communication, job frustration, power and policies.

Measures have been taken under Industrial Relation as well as Human Resource Management to help in the study of the above dynamics resulting gives birth to the psychological term stress. Although stress is one of the most widely researched topic in Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, studies that have examined stress experience of faculty in higher education is scarce. Faculty members from around the globe experience high level of stress. This study is an attempt to create an awareness of stress and its management in the higher educational institutions.

Data collection is been employed by both primary and secondary ways in colleges of Guwahati city. The study further attempts to put forward more measures to overcome stress experienced by faculty.

**Keywords:** stress, higher education, faculty and management.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Stress management refers to a wide spectrum of techniques aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. The term 'stress' refers only to a stress with significant negative consequences, or distress in the terminology advocated by Hans Selye, rather than what he calls eustress, a stress whose consequences are helpful or otherwise positive.

Stress can manifest itself in a variety of emotional, behavioural, and even physical symptoms that vary enormously among different individuals. Faculty in Guwahati are faced with inundated workplace by a number of factors impinging on their effectiveness within the classroom. For instance, teachers have to contend with taking responsibility for the high dropout rate in high schools, high work load, poor status and poor salaries, role overload maintaining discipline lack of resources, lack of time, excessive meetings, large class sizes, lack of assistance, lack of support, and hostile parents inadequate teachers' training and resource allocation, lack of career development, lack of recognition, dissatisfaction with work policies or job insecurities, health issues, high blood pressure, diabetes, alcoholism and HIV. A lot of work regarding occupational stress has been done concerning low productivity, job satisfaction, and high

absenteeism, physical and psychological disorders; yet, very few studies were conducted regarding stress in institution of higher education.

Rapid changes in the world and technology have exacerbated teacher's perceived professional incompetence teachers experience stress due to the lack of occupational confidence. In addition, it has been found that job satisfaction and teacher stress are strongly correlated, as the amount of stress and degree of satisfaction experienced by teachers influences the quality of life of teachers. Events such as marriage, divorce, pregnancy, death of a loved one and change of residence are related to teachers' life satisfaction that could affect their stress and performance at work.

Moreover to the systemic stresses, teachers are also exposed to traumatic stress, which include primary stress and secondary stress. Examples of primary stress include assault, threats of violence and intimidation and secondary stress includes news of violent and distressing events and witnessing how others are subjected to trauma.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The study has been conducted on faculty stress management and the objectives of the study are:

1. To study the various factors which cause stress and its variance on male and female?

2. To study the effect of stress on individual and pupils.
3. To study the ways helpful in coping up stress.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in determining the level of stress according to stressors among faculty members of Higher Educational Institutions in Guwahati city is based on primary as well as secondary data. The instruments used for primary data collection included a self-administered questionnaire, namely Faculty stress, its impact on the institution and self. Personal interview was also used in this study. The population in this study consisted of 300 teachers from various colleges of Guwahati city. The ideal sample size constitutes approximately 200 respondents. For the purpose of this research 150 questionnaires were administered of which 100 questionnaires were returned. Interviewed faculty were 80 out of 100 approached. Permission was obtained from the respected Higher Educational Institutions of Guwahati city to distribute and administer a total of one hundred and fifty. Faculty stresses, its impact on the institution and self questionnaires to teachers at the selected colleges in Balaji, Borjhar, Chandmari, RBI-Guwahati, Panbazar, Zoo Road and Bara Service area that participated in the research study. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the respondents, at which instance an agreed upon collection date was determined; in most cases it was a week after the distribution of the questionnaire. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and assuring respondents of the anonymity and confidentiality of the research accompanied each questionnaire.

## LIMITATION

The study for faculty stress was to be conducted in the colleges of Guwahati city. But few disadvantages dropped in and colleges covering few areas of Guwahati city were undertaken. The limitation which bounded the research study is:

1. Difficult to design and implement a test to provide results regarding the effect of stressors that may be true in all territory.
2. Faculty members being large due to various streams and specialisation, it is an expensive routine distributing questionnaire for their response.
3. Change of stressors as time causes trouble in arriving at a proper conclusion for the stress caused at a time or period of a faculty member's life.
4. A broad outlook is lacking.
5. Lack of support from corporate based academicians.
6. It may not be reliable if personal subjectivity creeps in.
7. Married newly joined professor's lack in the colleges in both male and female section.

## ANALYSIS

The result of the structured questionnaire respondents are given below. As per the first objective the stressors and its variance are:

1. 95% of the total male respondents and, 92% of the total female respondents showed stress in both government and private educational institution. Male professors are a bit ahead as been affected by stress in teaching then the female professors with a limitation that the responder interviewed presented high level of stress in female then male. Thus, after further analysis it is of the view that the level of stress varies among the professors across marital status and most importantly career duration.
2. Male professors who are married, newly married as well stabilised in their married life that is after 11 years as per criteria of survey (1-10) years are led to high stress in tools and technology and salary rating eighty percent 80% and 90% consecutively, whereas, less stress in relation to pupils, communication, class timings, homework balance, and paternity rating 10%, 40%, 10%, 8% and 20% consecutively. The reason behind is the price rise of essential commodities, maintaining standard of living as well as starting up a family needs healthy economic balance. The behaviour of now day's pupil is much different from the earlier. The rebellious and arrogant nature class becomes difficult for the teachers to take account of. The digitalisation of blackboard, use of internet for notes as well as advance learning is needed in colleges but the facility lacks still in the colleges.
3. The females professors who are newly married as per criteria of survey (1-10) years as well stabilised after 11 years of marriage are led to high stress in class timings, homework balance, maternity, tools and technology and salary rating 70%, 80% and 90% consecutively, whereas, less stress in relation to pupils, communication and hours of work rating 8%, 30% and 60% consecutively. A child needs twenty four hours of attention being unable of speech and proper expression. Growing period of a child leads to cause of stress among the female married teachers. In growing economic scenario of high price rise it becomes important for both the members of the family to work for future security like children educating, accidents, physical hindrances, etc. Thus unsatisfactory salary becomes a cause of stress. In view to unmarried female professors stress is high in case of tools and technology and salary rating 95% and 60% consecutively, whereas, less stress in relation to pupils, communication, class timings and homework balance rating 10%, 50%, 12% and 25% consecutively. While maintaining the pupils and administration at college a woman is in great demand at home as she is the home maker and administrator at best. Maintaining at home work balance becomes of much stress

level for the female professors at time of occasion, events or any health hazard taken place at her place of living.

As per the second objective the effects of stressors and its consequences are:

1. Psychological, physiological and behavioural are the three main categories under which the effect of stress can be mentioned. The effect of stress in the professor's professional life and professional life rates nil effect physiologically for both male and female teachers. On the other hand female professors are highly affected physiologically in professional as well as personally rating 60% and 77% consecutively as compared to male professors rating 30% and 20% consecutively. Whereas male professors are highly affected behaviourally in professional as well as personally rating 43% and 68% consecutively as compared to female professors rating 23% and 52%. The cause of females getting affected physiologically is because of maternity, excessive work at home and level of responsibility is high in regard to institutional designation or home maintenance. Since the females deal with the mood swings more than the males at home they get themselves accustomed to behaviour of the outsider resulting less affected by behaviour and overlapping it on self behaviourally. The cause of males getting affected behaviourally is because males are much suppressed by feelings and expression, thus they are unable to acclimatise to the situation prevailing. They over pour stress on self behaviour by smoking, arrogant to some people behaviour, etc. As known fact, males are stronger by physic then females; they can manage to take the amount of burden on their health.

As per the third objective the coping strategies are

- The highest coping strategy chosen by faculty to cope up stress is physical exercise with 96% rating as very high necessity.
- Ranging to the second strategy chosen is yoga and meditation with 82% as very high.
- Controlling one's own behaviour is rated third important coping strategy for stress with 68%.
- Pampering oneself is chose the least important with only 2%.
- Finally rearranging one's job schedule is regarded as very high and high necessity for the respondents with 14%.

Other than the mentioned ways to reduce stress the faculty members have mentioned some self stress reduction strategies too. They are to be open to feelings and opinion as this will help the person in stress with ways to cope it up. Advices, opinions and practical situation sometimes prove beneficial to all. Acceptance of professional problems is the only option when stress is caused in result of higher decisions as well as the government's clause and policies related to the professor's

term period as well as salary increment. Discussing professional problems with colleagues help reduce stress as they can provide with necessary advice to deal with it. Even simply sharing about the problem result beneficial and help reduce stress.

## FINDINGS

The findings as per the analysis and interpretation done are:-

- a) Female workers as faculty members are more in number in the higher educational institution than male whether private or government institution. This is because of the equality of work as been believed by the society in now days.
- b) Stress is seen more in male teachers than female teachers with a limitation that the respondents varied in different level of experiencing stress by their marital status.
- c) Keeping in view the cause of stress male and female teachers both experience high stress in salary and tools and technology section whether married or not. This is probably because of the price hike and up gradation of standard of living.
- d) Whereas, married female teachers are more stressed in the section of maternity, homework balance and most importantly class timings. These stressors hamper the relativity in maintaining their life and also deal with the children growth prospect.
- e) As of the outcome from the stressors female teachers experience more stress in the area of health that is physiologically than the male teachers.
- f) Whereas, the male teachers experience more stress in the area of behaviour than that of female teachers.
- g) Also this outcome can be seen on pupils by their reaction to teacher's significance, result due to the teachings in class.
- h) Coping strategies laid down that physical exercise and yoga, meditation results as stress busters. Our mind and body needs to be relaxed for which these therapeutic as well as clinical recommendations are advisable and is practiced highly by the faculty members to reduce stress level.
- i) Stress reduction is the last opined way to free stress by self help. In this section being open with feelings and sharing opinion is highly practiced by the faculty members as interviewed.
- j) A very small group of the study subject relied on stress busting methods as a substitute mechanics than the major if not followed are:-
- k) Going for shopping is recommended by 60% of the female respondents as stress busters.
- l) Hanging out with friends or family is regarded as stress buster by 36% of the total respondents.
- m) Listening to music, watching movie and spending time with family and children is regarded by 23% of the total respondents.

n) Relieving frustration on someone else other than the person or situation inflicting the mental agony is been regarded by 4% of the male respondents as a method of stress busting.

## CONCLUSION

Although each faculty group had a distinct pattern of sources of stress, certain stressors were found to be common to all faculty groups. The majority related either to time or resource constraints—insufficient time to keep abreast of current events or to do what was expected in the job, or insufficient salaries, difficulties in securing financial support, and so on.

Despite the fact that stress intervention programs which work well in one occupation are not always successful in others since professors experience similar types of stress, similar stress management strategies may be applicable across campuses. The results of the current study revealed that female faculty experience more stress if compared to male faculty members; as far as we know, these findings meet with those of many studies conducted in western countries men. It was found that male have more concerns regarding the life style and the facilities they are supposed to provide to their families, even though undergoing debts and loans. Furthermore, it seems that both males and females, regardless their academic levels, use a problem-focused coping strategies, but on the other hand, females tend to solicit support of their environs more than males; this could be due to the way girls and boys are raised in Lebanon, where a girl is encouraged to express her feeling and ask the others' help; as for the boy, he is forbidden to do so considering that he has to stand for himself and take the fights alone to prove his virility. It seems that education cannot erase such ideas from people's collective unconscious.

Finally, we can say that no matter an individual becomes educated; nature and nurture have the most important weight.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no "one size fits all" solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies. Focus on what makes you feel calm and in control. Several therapeutic implications must be addressing employee mental health problems, assessment of individual stress related problems as well as introducing a medical aid fund that promotes healthy living through an incentive and reward programme, instituting stress management programmes at regular intervals to ensure the stress is managed proactively at higher educational institutions, efforts to reduce employee stress by decreasing role-related problems and combating stress by delegating

responsibilities, setting realistic goals, better time-management and realistic self-assessment.

Several general recommendations in personal life are learning to say "no" whether in personal or professional life, one must refuse to accept added responsibilities, avoiding people who stress one out by limiting the amount of time one spend with that person or end the relationship entirely, taking control of one's environment by avoiding hot-button topics like religion or politics, analyzing one's schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks.

Several recommendations for implementing in professional life are setting aside relaxation time, connecting with people who enhance one's life, focusing on the things one can control, sharing feelings, expressing what one is going through can be very cathartic, learning to forgive, reframing problems and being more assertive. Several psychological recommendations are exercising regularly as it plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress, having a healthy diet, reducing caffeine and sugar, avoiding alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs and getting adequate sleep.

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